SATURDAY SPECIAL / A2-1

Alessandra de Rossi stands out in lackluster Singaporean thriller

SPORTS / A21

Letran Knights put away NCAA championship

ACROSS / A15

Leader of striking Nestlé workers murdered in Calamba City

NEWS / A2

Psychiatric tests for Pinay murder suspect in Singapore

Luisita to fight gov't over stock contract cancellation

By Blanche S. Rivera

HACIENDA LUISITA WILL DEFINITELY NOT be a stroll in the sugarcane fields for the Department of Agrarian Reform.

The management of Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) is poised to fight government initiatives to revoke the stock distribution option (SDO)

LUISITA/ A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Coming soon from carabao laboratory: Guyito clone

RESEARCHERS SAY they are close to creating the world's first clone of a water buffalo [carabao] that could eventually help raise productivity levels for millions of impoverished farmers.

COMING SOON/ A17

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Saturday, September 24, 2005 ★★ 70 pages / 9 sections / Vol. 19 / No. 288 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Emergency rule feared

LYN RILLON

PRESIDENT Arroyo checks out the services available for residents at the HARV Relocation Area in Bgy. Bignay, Valenzuela. For instance, the Serbisyo Muna Caravan 2 provides dental and medical services. Many HARV residents were relocated from the squatter colonies along the old railroad tracks.

Opposition says DOJ drafted proclamation

AN OFFICIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUStice has drafted a presidential proclamation that stops short of a declaration of martial law, according to opposition leaders, including former Solicitor General Frank Chavez and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Sought for comment, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said of the report: "It's way off the mark. I don't think it (emergency rule) was considered at all. It's a bit wild."

A spokesperson of opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said: "We have not heard about it. We checked with a police general in Camp Crame and he has not heard anything about it. But it's still an option for President Macapagal-Arroyo."

Chavez told the INQUIRER that news of the draft proclamation was leaked to his group last night by a member of the staff of lawyer Benny Nicdao, chief of staff of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

It was Nicdao who drafted the proclamation, Chavez said, quoting Nicdao's staff member who, he said, was "alarmed" by its contents.

Quoting the source, Chavez said the phrase "martial law" might or might not be used, "but the effect would be the same."

The proclamation would purportedly "invoke the powers of the Commander in Chief to secure national security and interest" and would "effect the arrest of people critical of the government and causing public disorder."

Three independent sources, composed of relatives of DOJ officials, confirmed this.

"Unless they change their mind or schedule, this will be implemented this weekend," said Chavez, who spoke with the INQUIRER on the sidelines of a meet-

EMERGENCY/ A8

US report: Erap most acceptable successor

By Norman Bordadora

SPECIAL REPORT

SHOULD PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo be compelled to step down in the face of questions on the legitimacy of her administration, who does "a senior US policy-maker" think is "the most direct, and legally acceptable, potential successor"?

Ousted President Joseph Estrada, "a popular opposition figure, and who continues to receive broad public support," according to an "informal assessment" dated July 30 and prepared by the unnamed policy-maker.

The three-page report of the US Embassy in Manila also said

US REPORT/ A8

Gonzales case goes to high court

By Armand N. Nocum and TJ Burgonio

THE ISSUE OF THE DETENTION of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales has reached the Supreme Court, with his sister asking the tribunal to order his immediate release.

In a nine-page petition for writ of habeas corpus, the Bataan-based Violeta Gonzales Tolentino yesterday said the detention order on her brother issued by the Senate blue ribbon committee was a "gross violation" of his right to freedom of movement.

"[His] continued detention will not improve national security, public safety or public health. Instead, [it] will impair national security

GONZALES/ A18

Church, business split on protest crackdown

By Ronnel W. Domingo and Christian V. Esguerra

LEADERS OF THE ROMAN Catholic Church and the business community—two influential institutions that could make or break President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration—are divided on Malacañang's plans to get tough on protesters.

Their reactions yesterday reflected the differences within the institutions that surfaced in July at the height of the worst political crisis to engulf the 4-year-old Arroyo presidency.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported Ms Arroyo, pleading with protesters in Makati that their actions were undermining investor perception of the country.

PCCI president Donald G. Dee said his group recognized the people's right of expression, especially in matters of national concern. "But I'm sure this could be done through other means and in other venues," Dee said.

He said that the protests were affecting business operations, more on the perception level and less on things that could be quantified.

"We support the protesters' rights, but not to the point of scaring people away," he said, especially if the rallies occur often.

CHURCH/ A8

One of biggest exodus ever empties US Gulf Coast

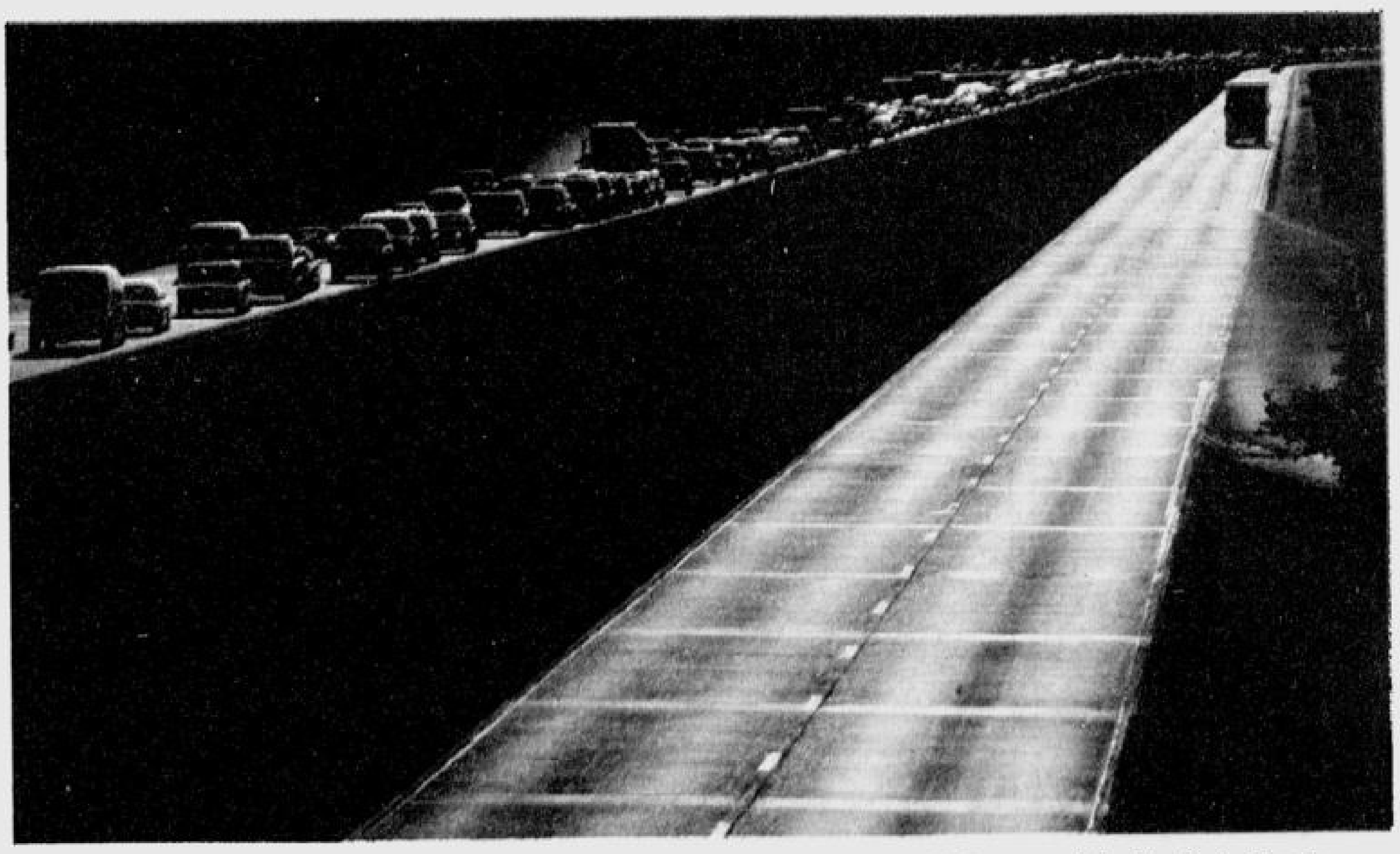
HOUSTON—HURRICANE RITA roared toward the Texas and Louisiana coasts early Friday, a second super-storm in a month that spurred a traffic-snarled exodus toward higher ground and fears it could cripple the heart of the nation's petrochemical industry.

The Category 4 hurricane was barreling north-west across the Gulf of Mexico, with winds near 220 kph, the United States National Hurricane Center said. Rita was expected to make landfall late on Friday or early on Saturday but its destination was unclear.

Nearly 2 million people along the Texas and Louisiana coasts were urged to get out of the way of Rita, a storm that weakened Thursday from a top-of-the-scale Category 5 hurricane.

The US mainland has not been hit by two Category 4 storms in the same year since 1915. Katrina

ONE OF BIGGEST/ A18



UNPRECEDENTED flight of people in advance of Hurricane Rita causes a traffic snarl on a highway out of the city of Lake Charles, Louisiana. The storm is expected to hit land by Saturday (Sunday here). The US mainland has not been hit by two Category 4 storms within a month of each other since 1915. Katrina came ashore last Aug. 29.

AP/AUSTIN-AMERICAN

ERIK ARAZAS

TREATED LIKE TERRORISTS, Jarque with wife Xenia denounce the United States on arrival here on Friday.

Jarques back, hit raw deal in US

By Nikko Dizon

"I WENT TO AMERICA WITHOUT any malice, nothing. I am 67 years old and Mrs. Jarque is 67 years old. How can we be terrorists in America?"

Retired Brig. Gen. Raymundo Jarque yesterday protested his detention and deportation by United States immigration authorities for being an alleged "terrorist."

The couple arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport shortly before 11 a.m. yesterday on a Korean Airlines flight from Los Angeles to a welcome from their son, Raymundo Jr., and other relatives, including the widow of their eldest son, former Capt. Rene Jarque.

"I strongly denounce one of the most treacherous acts done by the American security in the US Embassy here, members of the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], their Filipino friends and assets, and people manning the Department of Homeland Security," an angry Jarque told reporters on his return yesterday.

Jarque and his wife, Xenia, were held upon arrival from Manila at the Dallas airport in Texas on Tuesday, and deported to the Philippines the following day.

A report from the Philippine consul

JARQUES/ A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: A surge of strong winds associated with the enhanced southwest monsoon by Tropical Storm "Labuyo" is expected to affect the northern and western seaboard of Luzon and the western seaboard of Visayas.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/09/23/05

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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CRUSALDO Lapuebla, husband of murdered Guen Parangan Lapuebla, is flanked by his wife's aunt, Sally Parangan, and Philippine Ambassador to Singapore, Belen Fule-Anota on their way to court Friday. AP

A PROTESTER shouts slogans during a picket by the Migrante at the Singaporean embassy in Makati City Friday. AP

SC asked to nullify House dismissal of impeachment cases against GMA

OPPONENTS OF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL Arroyo yesterday asked the Supreme Court to nullify the decision by the House of Representatives to throw out the impeachment complaints filed against her.

Cebu Rep. Clavel Martinez, a former Arroyo ally, and several private lawyers told the high court that the House committed "grave abuse of discretion" and exercised its power "in a despotic manner" when it dismissed complaints against Ms Arroyo, which included vote-rigging and corruption allegations, based on "absurd technicalities."

"What resulted was the most farcical exercise worthy of the theatre of the absurd, except that the most cruel joke was inflicted on a public hungry for the truth about the serious allegations being raised in the impeachment," the 55-page petition said.

They urged the Supreme Court to nullify the decision and direct House Speaker Jose de Venecia to remand to the justice committee the amended impeachment complaint filed by opposition lawmakers.

They said Congress also violated the Constitution when it treated the "amended complaint as separate and distinct from the original (Oliver) Lozano complaint," among others.

The private lawyers who filed the petition include Herminio Harry Roque Jr., Joel Ruiz Butuan, Roger R. Rayel, Alfredo Ligon III and Gary S. Mallari.

Ms Arroyo survived an impeachment vote on Sept. 6 because of the numerical strength of her allies, averting a Senate trial that would have closely examined the allegations that she cheated her way to a fresh term in last year's presidential election.

The original and weakest complaint, filed by a private lawyer, was dismissed after the committee found it insufficient in substance. The two others were barred on the grounds that the constitution allows the filing of only one complaint against the same official within a year.

Legislators threw out all three impeachment charges against Ms Arroyo despite warnings the move could worsen her political crisis and spark street protests.

Martinez said her colleagues in the lower house had "committed an unconstitutional act – a grave abuse of discretion tantamount to lack or excess of jurisdiction" when they voted 158-51 to dismiss the cases against Ms Arroyo.

But House Minority Leader Francis Escudero yesterday said he did not expect a favorable ruling from the Supreme Court on the new petition.

"We respect her decision to bring the issue before the Supreme Court," he told reporters. "My only hope is that the high tribunal will not dismiss it peremptorily as it did with the previous petitions."

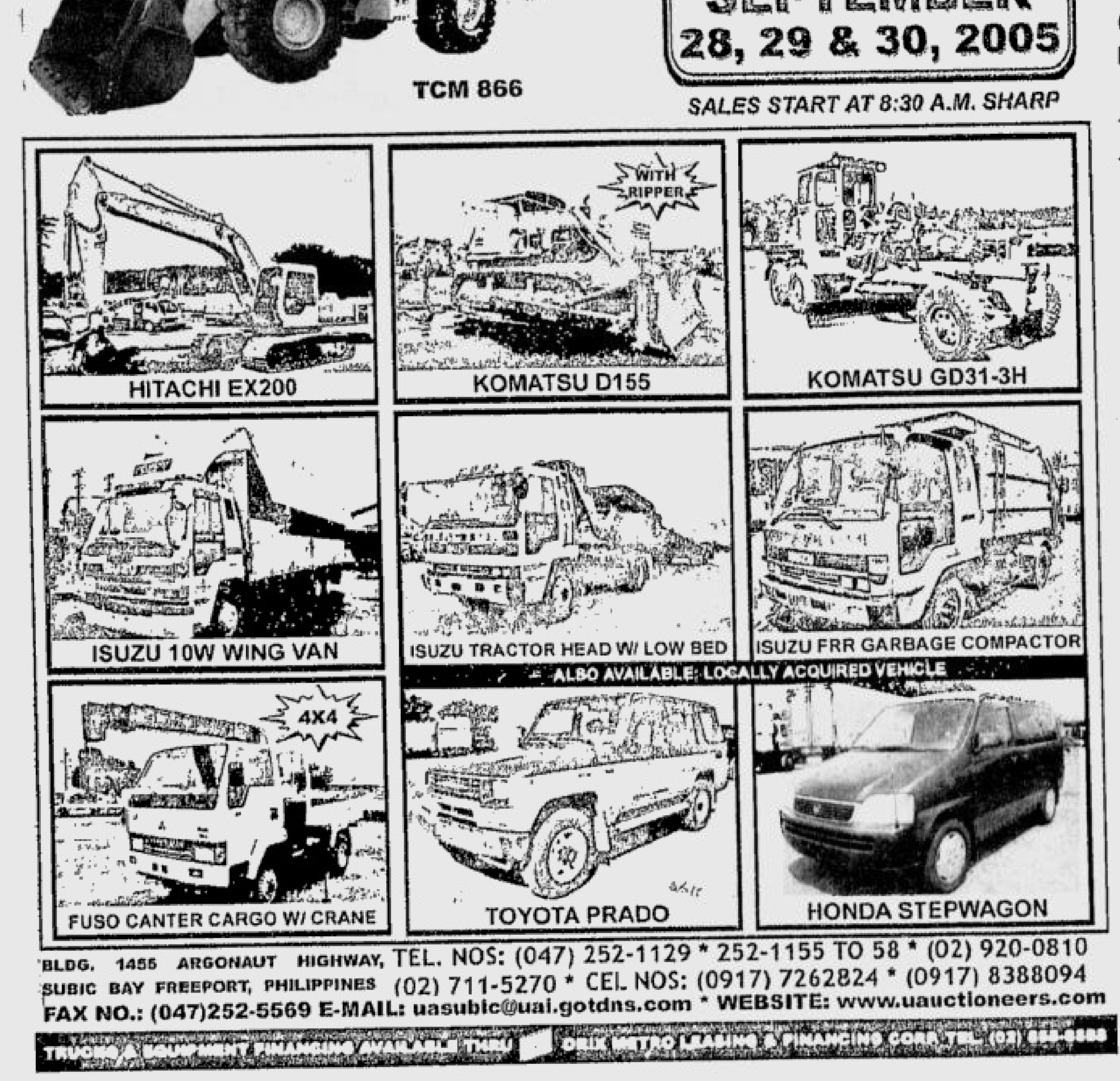
On Sept. 15, the Supreme Court threw out two petitions seeking to revive the impeachment cases against Arroyo, declaring them "insufficient" and "premature."

"Our confidence on the Supreme Court (ruling in the opposition's favor) is not high considering that they dismissed the previous (cases to revive the complaint)," Escudero said.

"We have a good six months (to file a petition before the court) but that is something that we are not seriously looking at," he added.

Escudero said the opposition was not seriously considering taking the matter to the high court since they believed that the House, on its own, should have corrected the "mistakes" it made when it dismissed the complaints.

He pointed out that Martinez, a member of the ruling Lakas-CMD party, belongs to the majority coalition in the House. *AP, Reuters, Armand N. Nocum and Philip C. Tubeza*



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MURDER IN SINGAPORE

Psychiatric tests for Guen; hubbies meet

SINGAPORE—A FILIPINO MAID ACCUSED of murdering a compatriot in Singapore and cutting up her body will be sent for psychiatric tests next week, her lawyer said yesterday.

Guen Aguilar, 29, who faces death by hanging if convicted of the murder of fellow Filipino maid Jane Lapuebla, 26, was also ordered to be moved from police custody to the Changi Women's Prison.

A somber-looking Aguilar made her third court appearance yesterday and was ordered to show up again on Oct. 14.

Lapuebla's severed head and limbs were found on Sept. 9 inside a sports bag left on a street side in Singapore's Orchard Road shopping district. Her torso was later found at a nature park.

Defense lawyer Shashi Nathan said he has been given full access to Aguilar, who was arrested hours after the gruesome discovery of the body parts, and spent four hours talking to her Thursday, but he would not disclose details.

"This morning the prosecution confirmed that they have finished the investigation into Guen's case," Nathan told reporters. "She's now remanded at Changi Women's Prison and sometime next week, she will be sent for state-ordered psychiatric evaluation."

Nathan said it was premature to discuss details of the case.

He said speculation about the involvement of a man in a love triangle seemed to be "conjecture" on the part of the media.

"I don't think there is a tall, dark boyfriend. I've not been informed of any such person," said Nathan, who also described Aguilar as healthy but suffering from emotional pain and concerned about her two young sons in the Philippines.

Another meeting was being arranged for her husband, Edwin, to visit her in prison before he returns to the Philippines this weekend.

Aguilar's husband was present in court yesterday, as were the husband and aunt of the victim, but both families sat a few feet apart. After the hearing, they were whisked off in separate Philippine Embassy cars.

Aguilar's case has generated intense interest in the Philippines due to parallels with Flor Contemplacion, another maid who was hanged in Singapore 10 years ago for the murder of a fellow Filipino domestic helper and a Singaporean boy.

The hanging and the publicity surrounding it strained diplomatic ties between Manila and Singapore for a while.

Also attending yesterday's court hearing was Dante Jimenez, the founder of Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, who was in Singapore to lend "moral support" to the victim's relatives and monitor the trial.

He said the remains of Lapuebla would be flown back to the Philippines on Sunday after a final autopsy attended by three visiting Filipino pathologists.

In Manila, some 20 members of Migrante International, a group protecting the interests of Filipino migrant workers, demonstrated yesterday outside the Enterprise Center on Ayala Avenue, which houses the Singapore Embassy. *AFP with a report from Tarra V. Quismundo*

Opposition bares new tack: Expose GMA sins every week

By Leila B. Salaverria

A CHANGE IN STRATEGY.

After Malacañang's move to crack down on dissent, particularly, through street protests, the opposition has adopted a new tack in its bid to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Starting Monday, the opposition will be exposing every week thereafter new evidence pertaining to Ms Arroyo's wrongdoings, particularly those involving corruption.

Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano said the evidence that would be presented to the public would be explosive.

"Starting Monday, this Monday or next Monday, every single week we will release new evidence on a new topic. And remember we have not released anything about corruption yet. And you will be shocked at the magnitude of the amount involved. Not millions, but we're talking about billions of pesos," he said during a Kilosbayan forum at the De La Salle University.

He said the opposition has so far presented only around 15 to 20 percent of their evidence against Ms Arroyo, and already majority of Filipinos surveyed want her to stop her term.

He also said the initiation of maximum reforms, or being pro-active was probably the most desirable option the pro-impeachment congressmen could take after they failed to impeach the President.

Saga of 'Boat People' finally coming to an end

By Volt Contreras

A GROUP OF 229 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES are to be flown out of the country for resettlement in the United States next week as the heroic but now forgotten saga of the Vietnamese "Boat People" finally draws to a close.

The International Organization for Migration said in a statement yesterday that about 1,370 more such refugees are to leave for the United States within the next six months under an RP-US accord in which Washington agreed to take in the Vietnamese, whom it had originally refused to admit as refugees. The Americans believed these people were fleeing poor economic conditions rather than political persecution at home.

Numbering 1,855, this group are the last batch of Boat People who lived as "stateless" citizens in camps set up by the United Nations in Bataan and Palawan after fleeing communist rule in their homeland. This particular group had left Vietnam 16 years ago, long after the US-back South Vietnamese government fell to the communist North Vietnam in 1975 and long after the waves of Vietnamese making the dangerous sea crossing had ebbed.

When the camps closed in 1996, they literally dispersed throughout the country, mostly making a living as market or street vendors, according to the IOM. A group of about 255 other Vietnamese, who have married Filipinos and now have families here, do not qualify for entry in the United States and will remain in the country, he added.

At the height of the exodus, tens of thousands of Boat People, often packed in flimsy wooden fishing boats, risked high monsoon winds and pirate attacks in the South China Sea. An untold number never made the crossing. Those who did find their way to such places as the Philippines, China, Malaysia and Thailand ended up in overcrowded and unsanitary camps. Many were beaten up or driven back to sea by angry locals.

Patrick Corcoran, acting operations chief at of IOM's Manila office, said the first batch of 229 refugees are to leave before dawn next Monday aboard a chartered flight to Los Angeles.

Once in the US, their status will be changed to "lawful permanent residents," Corcoran said, adding that they will be eligible for US citizenship after five years. Many of the refugees have relatives already in the US.

The Switzerland-based IOM assisted in the medical screening, travel arrangements, and other administrative requirements of the refugees who were approved by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services office.

The flight for the second batch will be either in late October or early November this year. IOM expects all the eligible refugees to be flown to the US within the next four to six months via regular commercial flights, Corcoran said.

In a statement issued after the signing of the resettlement agreement in April 2004, the US Embassy said it would apply a "generous refugee-screening standard" for the Vietnamese.

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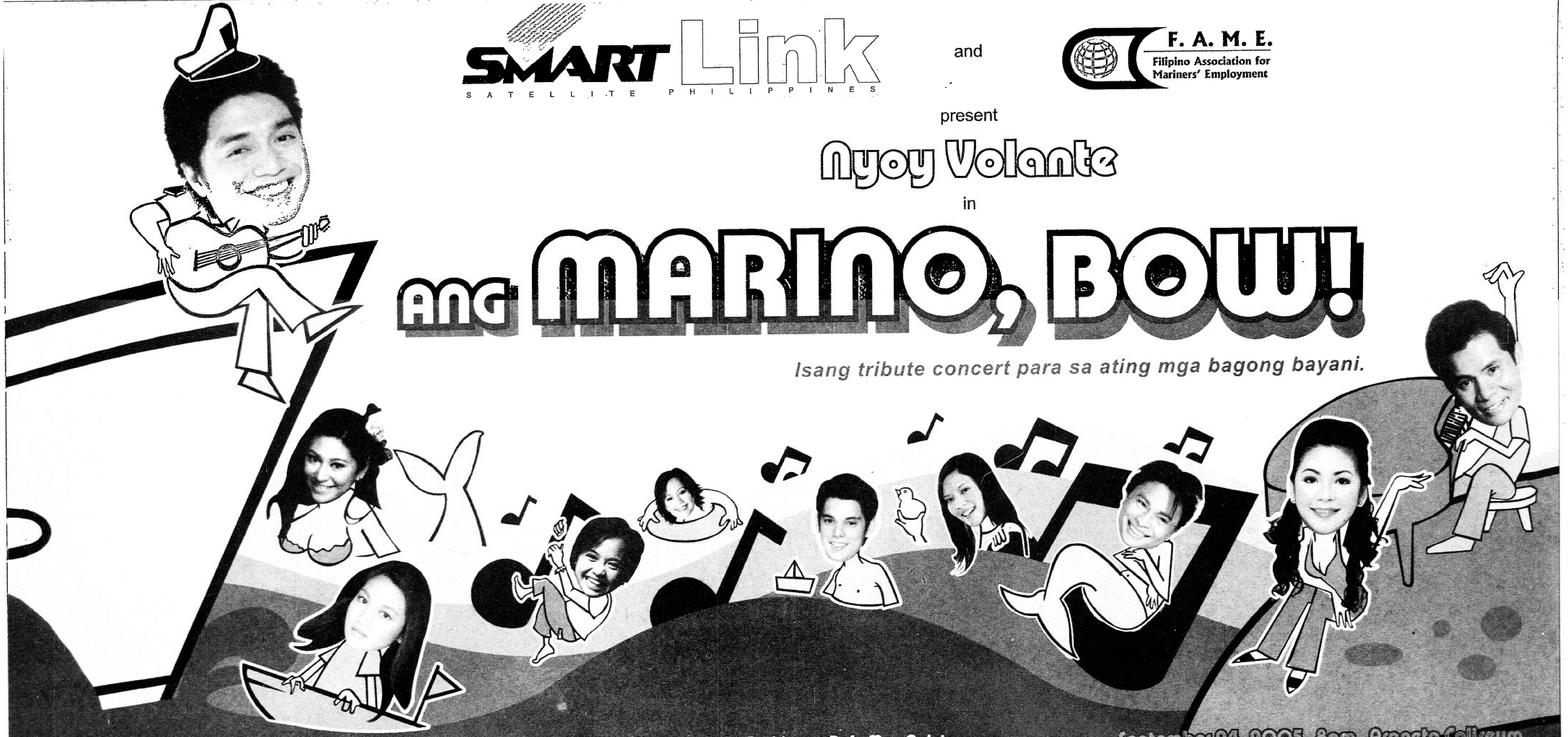

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Drug syndicates now importing 'shabu,' says PNP narcs chief

By Luige del Puerto

RECENT HIGH-PROFILE raids of shabu laboratories in the country have prompted drug syndicates to import methamphetamine hydrochloride, popularly known as shabu, instead of manufacturing the banned substance here, according to the police's anti-narcotics czar.

"I'm not saying there are no more shabu laboratories here," said Director Marcelo Ele Jr., head of the PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force. "The drug laboratories might still be there, but they might not be operating," he pointed out.

Ele said the risk of operating here has become higher for drug syndicates. "One, they will not risk exposing their chemists. Two, the risk of smuggling the drugs in is lesser," he said.

The logical conclusion, he said, is for drug syndicates to import finished products to sustain their multibillion-peso business.

In recent years, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency has dismantled drug laboratories in the country which are some of the biggest in Southeast Asia.

Since 2002, PDEA, working closely with the police and other law enforcement agencies, has seized nearly P40 billion worth of illegal drugs, chemicals and equipment, and uncovered some 30 clandestine laboratories and 21 chemical warehouses nationwide.

Ele said his office has already coordinated with the Bureau of Customs, the Bureau of Immigration, and other government agencies in charge of securing the country's air and seaports, adding these are where the action would be.

PDEA chief at Jade Vine affair today

UNDERSECRETARY Anselmo S. Avenido Jr., director general of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, will be the guest of honor and keynote speaker at the Philippine Woman's Christian Temperance Union Inc. (PWCTU) 76th anniversary celebration today at 2 p.m. at the Jade Vine Executive Inn, United Nations Avenue, Ermita, Manila.

The theme of this year's affair is "Strengthening PWCTU-NGO Partnership Against Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking."

Avenido will be introduced by Villa Granada de Guia, PWCTU national president. Sharon Rose Duremdes, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, will deliver the inspirational message and invocation.

Following the speeches will be a musical program and election of new PWCTU officers.

The PCU Kalinangan Dance Troupe, the Salvation Army, the Parañaque IEMELIF Chancel Choir and Adelaida Sebastian will render musical numbers.

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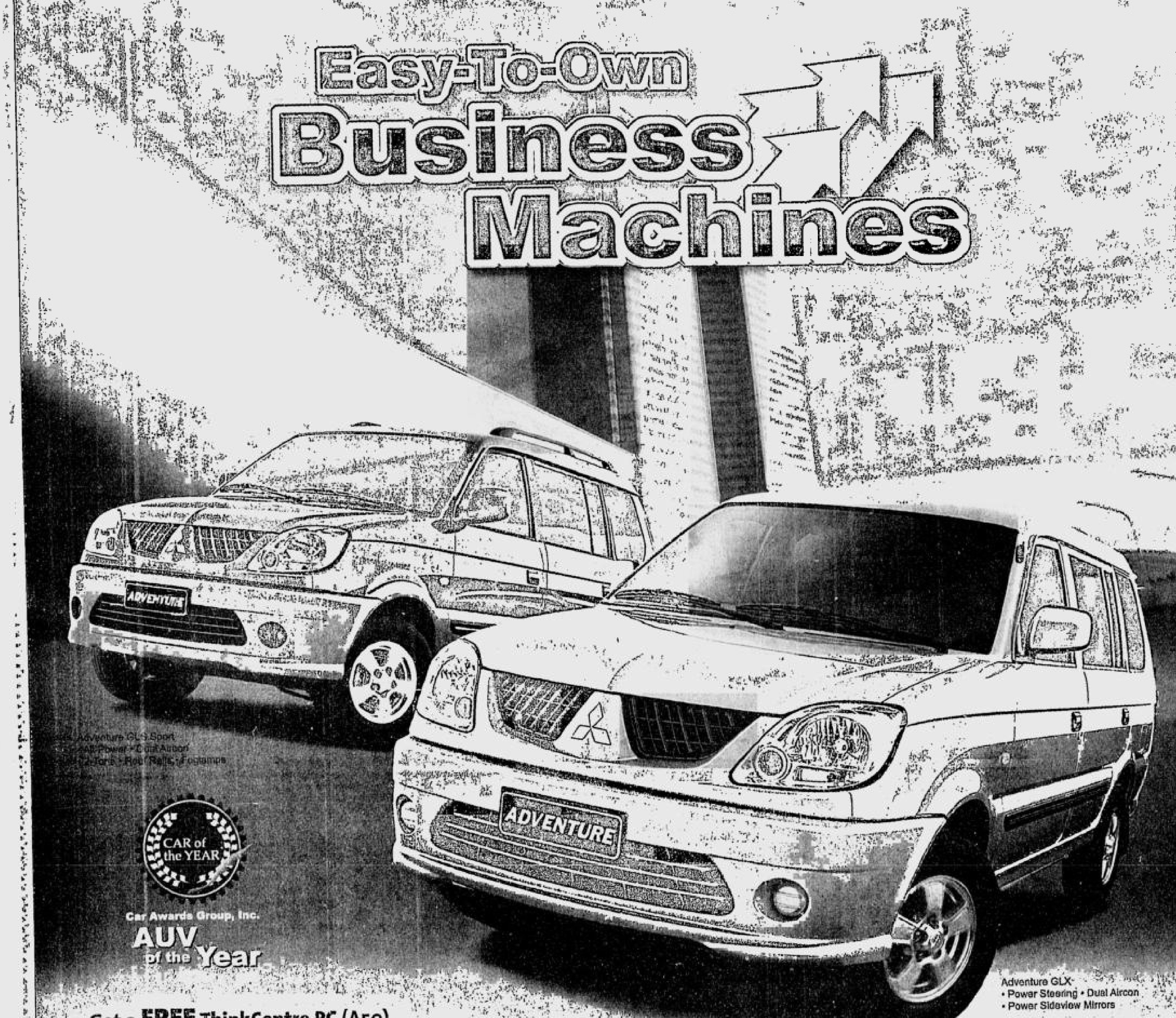

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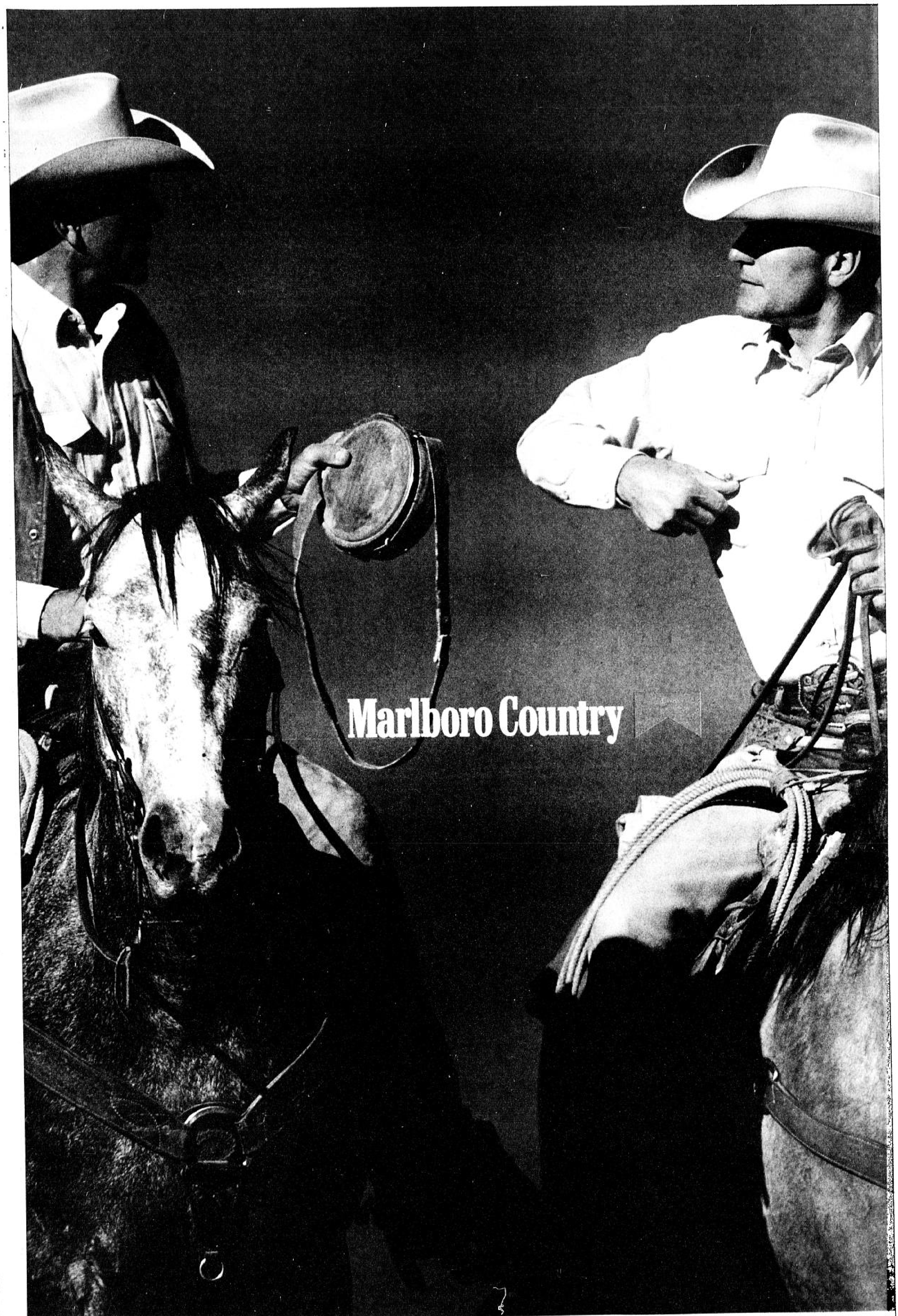
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Senate votes to probe Northrail project

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER A DELAY OF SEVEN MONTHS, the Senate is to finally open an inquiry into the controversial $503-million Northrail project, the joint undertaking with China to rehabilitate the 32-km rail connection between Caloocan and Bulacan.

Voting unanimously, senators adopted late Wednesday Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's motion to convene the Senate into a committee of the whole to look into the contract between the North Luzon Railway Corp. and a Chinese state firm to undertake the project.

The inquiry will start next Thursday, according to a staff member at the office of Senate President Franklin Drilon.

"The purpose of the inquiry is to shed light on the controversy," Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said but declined to discuss other details of the inquiry.

He said Drilon was the one responsible for setting the terms of the inquiry, such as deciding the date of the first hearing, drawing up the list of resource persons and sending out the invitations.

Enrile delivered a privilege speech in February, denouncing the contract's allegedly onerous terms, particularly the award of the contract to the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. Group (CNMEG) without public bidding.

Drilon, who is in China, has claimed that the Northrail project was one of the "colossal corrupt deals" of the Arroyo administration. He said it was a major reason for his withdrawal of support for the President last July.

The Northrail contract was one of the cases that pro-impeachment legislators planned to present at the impeachment trial of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The North Luzon Railway Corp. and CNMEG signed the contract to build the railway in December 2003.

Under the agreement, China's Export Import Bank would bankroll the project with a $400-million loan and the Philippine government would put up a counterpart fund of $103 million.

The 32.138-km, dual-track railway stretches from Caloocan City north to Malolos in Bulacan along the old route of the Philippine National Railway system.

This section, making up the first phase the Northrail project will have stations in Caloocan, Valenzuela City, Marilao, Bocaue, and Guiguinto and Malolos.

The next phase of the project will run from Malolos to the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga province.

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Bicol mayor in hot water over 'jueteng'

TIWI, ALBAY – THE vice mayor of this town, together with other local officials, have filed graft charges before the Office of the Ombudsman against their own mayor for allegedly allowing the illegal numbers game, "jueteng," to proliferate in their town.

Vice Mayor Ruth Corral accused Mayor Jaime Villanueva of violating RA 3019 (the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), RA 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Employees and Public Officials) and RA 9287 (the anti-jueteng law).

Villanueva was the first elected official to be charged before the Ombudsman for violating the law against jueteng.

Corral also filed administrative charges against Villanueva and sought his preventive suspension.

In her complaint, Corral alleged that the operator of jueteng in Tiwi was Villanueva's older brother, Nelson.

She said it was Villanueva himself who informed her and the Tiwi municipal council sometime in July 2004 of Nelson's plan to start jueteng operations in the town.

"Despite my continued protestations and those of various quarters, including our local Catholic Church, against the proliferation of the illegal number game in our municipality, Mayor Villanueva remained unmindful and indifferent, as if nothing illegal was going [on]....," Corral said.

Nelson F. Flores

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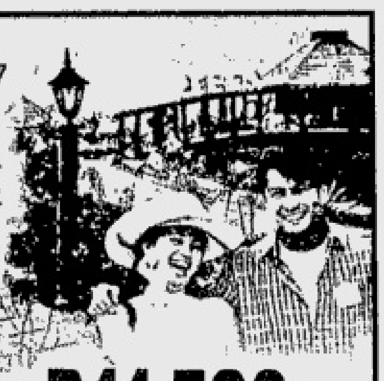

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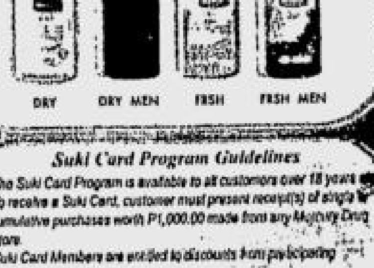

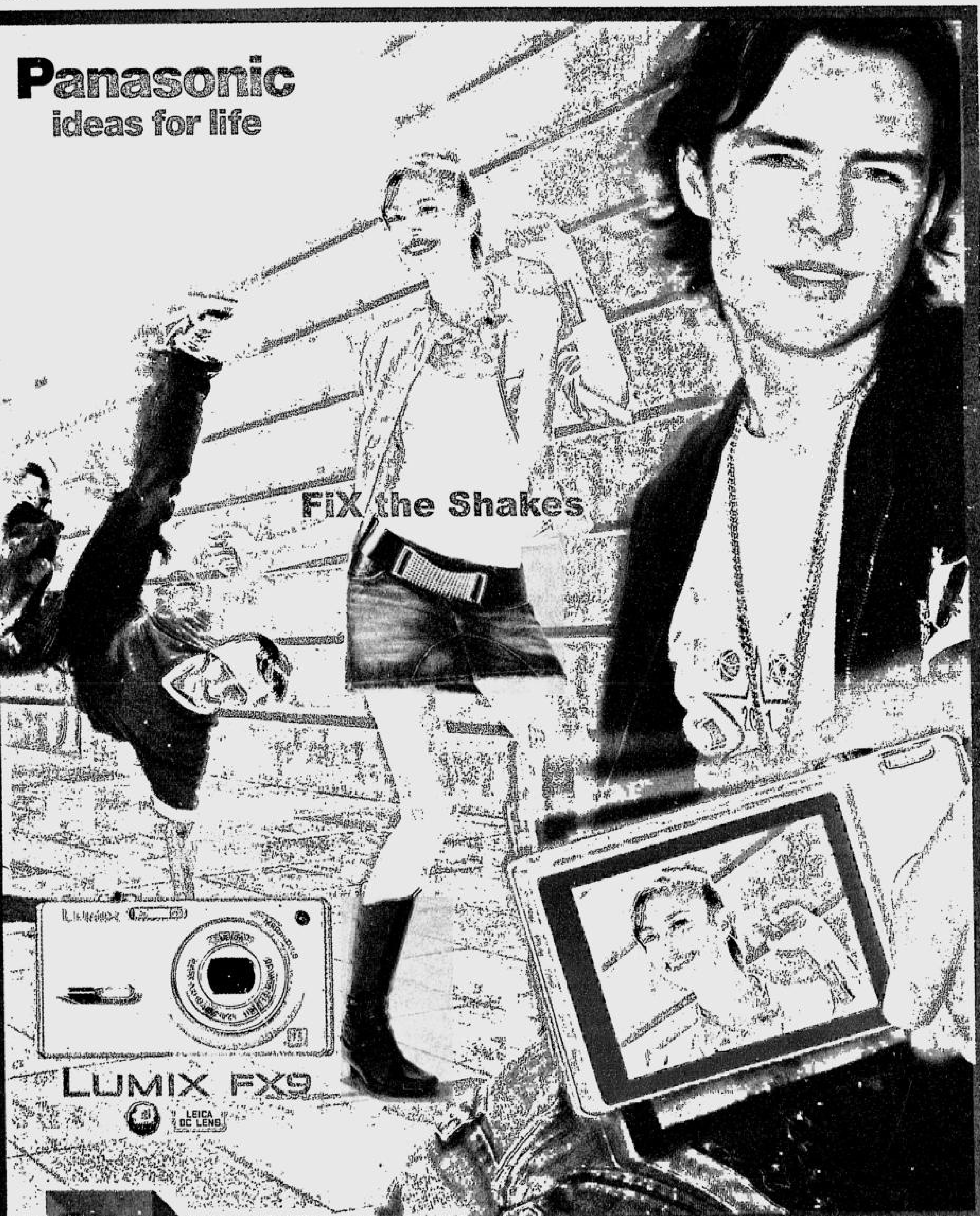

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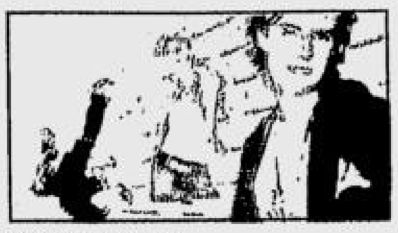

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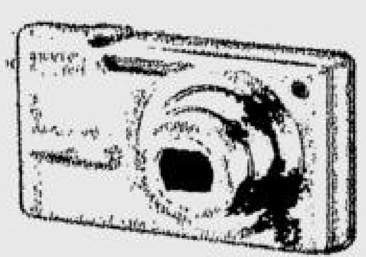

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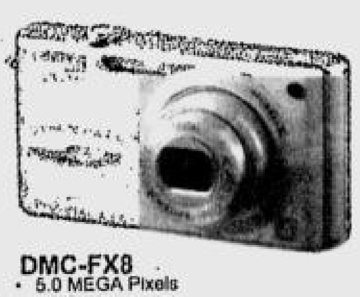

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Metro rallies: Different strokes for different folks

By Margaux C. Ortiz

IF JEJOMAR BINAY'S MAKATI IS an opposition stronghold, Lito Atienza's Manila is an administration bailiwick.

"From the start, the city government of Manila has maintained that protesters must first notify us to coordinate their activities with the police and protect the interest of the majority," Atienza said in a phone interview.

The Manila mayor explained that the coordination would prevent the disruption of traffic and ensure the security of the rally participants.

"We cannot take risks because the government would be blamed if something happened to these protesters, considering the possible presence of terrorists during these activities," Atienza said. "We cannot allow anarchy to prevail, especially when it affects workers, students, and other residents who do not wish to participate in the rally."

Atienza said that President Macapagal-Arroyo only wanted order and security in the streets with her latest pronouncement.

"I'm sure she is not forbidding rallies from taking place, but for the protesters to secure permits from the city governments and the police first before holding their activities," the mayor said.

In Quezon City, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said he would grant rally permits to both militants and moderates "subject to certain conditions." It was up to the police, however, to disperse militants who failed to produce a permit, he said.

Belmonte said an application for a permit to rally would be denied, if, for instance, there was a threat of violence, or it would disrupt traffic at certain areas.

Quezon City Police District director Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr. said the police "maximum tolerance policy" was no longer in effect for demonstrators.

"Once we have determined that some groups do not have a permit, we'll inform them that the city government has not allowed the rally, and then ask them to leave," he said.

If the protesters resist, they will be dispersed "in a calm manner," he said.

Weekend rallies only on Edsa

Mayor Neptali Gonzales of Mandaluyong sees wisdom in Ms Arroyo's order to regulate protest actions. "We will respect their rights to hold protests but protesters also have to recognize the power of the government to regulate," said Gonzales.

He said rallies could be held on weekends or when they would not affect commuters in the city that saw the massive People Power rallies in 1986 and 2001 on Edsa that ousted Presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada,

Navotas Mayor Tobias Tiangco said he supported the no-permit-no-rally policy, since no one, not even the opposition, was above the law. He said Navotas would give equal treatment to groups opposed to or supportive of the Arroyo administration.

But he said the maximum tolerance policy ought to stay. Tiangco added that local governments should still allow protest actions in freedom parks, as peaceful assembly was the people's constitutional right.

Caloocan City information officer Alvin Feliciano said rallies with no permits would no longer be tolerated in the city, as ordered by Mayor Enrico Echiverri.

But the city will issue permits without discrimination.

Valenzuela City administrator Anicia Marquez took the same position, saying permits were a requisite for demonstrations in the city.

In southern Metro Manila, where protest rallies are rare, the rule of calibrated preemptive response would not be a problem.

No problem in Pasay

"We don't have rallies here that's why we have no problem with that," said Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad. However, he admitted that some groups were getting out of control during protest actions that there was a need to contain them.

"These [protesters] should police their own ranks," the mayor said.

In Muntinlupa City, Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said he would allow rallies. "The more you suppress them, the more they will become persistent," the mayor said. But he said protesters must avoid any untoward incidents and provocations.

For Taguig City Mayor Freddie Tinga, there must be a "give-and-take process" between the rallyists and the public.

The mayor believed that rallyists must be given the opportunity to express their grievances but they must respect those who would be affected by the rallies, said Ana Santos, city's Public Information Office head.

Parañaque City Mayor Florencio Bernabe said since the new policy was a Malacañang directive, the local government would "most likely go along with it." *With reports from DJ Yap, Jocelyn R. Uy and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

'There'll be blood in the streets'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WARNING BLOOD WILL spill in the streets, opponents of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday threatened to take their protest to the Palace gate if she cracked down on dissenters.

"Violence begets violence. There will be blood in the streets," said Sen. Serge Osmeña.

Left wing politicians said they would not be intimidated. "We will challenge this in Congress, the courts and the streets. Mrs. President, see you in Mendiola," said Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said Ms Arroyo's move was "indicative of a dictatorial mind-set." He said Malacañang feared an "unstoppable and increasingly popular move to oust her."

Responding to Malacañang's fears that protests in Makati were scaring off potential investors, Binay said that this was "a small price to pay for inculcating the correct moral values in our society."

"Economic concerns can never be above legal or moral ones ... that is tantamount to allowing businessmen and companies to break laws and morality in the name of profit."

On Thursday, Ms Arroyo announced a get-tough policy against protests three weeks after her allies in Congress junked impeachment cases against her for allegedly stealing last year's election. She specifically referred to rallies in Makati, where some 40,000 people massed in July at the height of demands for her resignation.

"I'm tired of chasing the bully around the schoolyard," the 58-year-old President said. She said the policy of maximum tolerance had been abused and she could not allow this to continue "to the detriment of the peace and order and the welfare of the greater majority."

On Wednesday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced that the government was enforcing the "rule of calibrated preemptive response in lieu of maximum tolerance."

The bigger bully

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Ms Arroyo's threat gave him more reason to join mass protests.

"We in the opposition will not be cowed by the biggest bully of them all and we will show her that," Lacson said. "If standing up for the truth is politicking and fighting for it is destabilizing, then all right-thinking Filipinos should not mind being politicians and destabilizers," Lacson said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the rule of law included respect for the right of people to peaceful protests. "They should not suppress this right because this will only ignite people's anger against the state," said Pangilinan.

"We are under a democracy, not dictatorship," said Pangilinan, who belongs to the Liberal Party which has called for the President's resignation.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Ms Arroyo was "pushing the people into the path of violence."

"Gloria is running true to form," Pimentel said. "She has no concern for the Constitution. What she wants, she would do lawful or not."

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada challenged the President "to arrest all of us ... jail us!"

"Where in the Constitution does it say you need a permit to have a rally? She has a tendency to become the next dictator," the son of ex-President Joseph Estrada said.

Too heavy a price

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero dismissed the President's claim that foreign investors were concerned about rallies. "What the investors want ... can only happen under an authoritarian rule. That would be too heavy a price for our countrymen to pay," Escudero said.

Said former Senate Minority Leader Vicente C. Sotto:

"The campus has only one bully these past close to five years and it is GMA herself as she announced her new rally policy of calibrated preemptive response. She has the numbers, she has the weapons, while the citizens and the opposition have only words and their feet for marching and assembly ... With GMA's 'no permit, no rally policy' who is the real bully?" *With reports from Tarra V. Quismundo and Philip C. Tubeza*

Emergency rule feared, says opposition

From page A1

ing with other members of the opposition.

"We hope it's not true, but we have reliable information that the DOJ has prepared this proclamation, which was ordered drafted by the President when she was abroad," Binay told the INQUIRER shortly before he was to go on television with a similar interview early this morning.

He said "antecedent facts" tended to lend credibility to the report. He cited Malacañang's announcement on Thursday of a crackdown on anti-government rallies.

He also cited a statement by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita a few weeks ago that martial law or emergency rule was always an option open to the President to quell destabilization moves against her administration.

"If true, that's the embodiment of a declaration of martial law," Binay said.

3 pages

Chavez said the arrest order and the list of people to be arrested were contained in another document. He said the names on the list, contained in three pages, was read to his group by their source at the DOJ.

Asked which would come first, the proclamation or the arrests, an opposition leader who requested anonymity said: "When did [US President George W.] Bush announce that US-led forces will invade Iraq? When the tanks were already there."

By Chavez's account, President Macapagal-Arroyo phoned Gonzalez when she was in the United States to preside over the United Nations Security Council summit and attend the UN World summit.

The justice secretary then phoned Nicdao, Chavez said.

Asked what could have precipitated Ms Arroyo's supposed instruction to Gonzalez, Chavez theorized that a briefing by US officials could have done it.

"But you cannot equate dissent with rebellion," he said, adding:

"If the President declares martial law, she would have the upper hand in the first 48 hours.

"If these things won't push, meaning we have successfully preempted it, it would be a breather."

Asked if it was possible that Ms Arroyo merely wanted to formalize her statements in the past few days regarding street protests, Chavez said: "The proclamation is far more serious than keeping peace and order. It was meant to kill dissent."

He also pointed out that even if the President were to say that she was issuing the proclamation for "the public good and public safety," there would have to be an "actual rebellion or invasion" to justify it.

Suspension

Coincidentally, Binay said he had also received reports that he would soon be suspended as mayor of Makati in connection with a pending graft case against him.

"My suspension is meant to stop me from issuing a permit to rally in Makati," he said. *Reports from Gerry Lirio and Cookie Micaller*

US report: Erap most acceptable successor

From page A1

"most political observers" viewed Ms Arroyo as "a weak, reactive leader whose technocratic leanings, oligarchic upbringing, overbearing personal style, and inability to connect with ordinary Filipinos" had kept her popularity ratings low "in a country that reveres warm and outgoing personalities."

The report added that Ms Arroyo's victory in the 2004 election was "tainted with credible rumors of corruption and vote buying, leaving her legitimacy once again in question..."

This has weakened her "ability to function effectively in a personality-based political culture," it said.

A copy of the report, along with copies of other US Embassy documents, was obtained by the INQUIRER from a source who asked not to be named.

Profile

The US government appeared so interested in Estrada that the embassy prepared a profile of him dated Aug. 26 and included in it a Malaysian official's expression of concern over peace in Mindanao if the ousted President were to take over from Ms Arroyo.

"Malaysian External Intelligence Organization (MEIO) director general Othman bin Abdul Razak was aware that his comments would reach the US government and may have been meant to influence as well as inform," said the profile on Estrada, which was prepared by a certain Hadley.

It added: "In late July 2005, commenting on the political difficulties being faced by [Arroyo], ... Othman stated that if Arroyo lost power, her departure would be detrimental to the ongoing peace process with the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front), if Estrada assumed the presidency."

The profile contained Estrada's background as a movie actor and his pro-poor program. More importantly for the Americans, it also contained his policies that were in line with the US agenda in the region.

It included Estrada's support for the ratification of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, and the all-out war against the separatist MILF and the extremist Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao.

The profile also said Estrada infuriated critics when he tried to have the Constitution amended to allow foreigners to buy and own land and to allow Asian investors to build casinos.

"Estrada insisted these [were] the only ways to get the country's economy moving forward," the profile said.

Political reemergence

The Aug. 26 profile also questioned the manner in which Ms Arroyo came to power in January 2001 vice Estrada.

"According to some observers, the transfer of power to Estrada's successor—then Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo—has caused a more complex question as to whether the manner in which this change in leadership was constitutional," it said.

The profile said Ms Arroyo "remained highly anxious" about Estrada.

"Pro-Estrada elements appeared buoyed by [his] seeming political reemergence. Most observers maintained that despite Estrada's condition, being in prison or house arrest, on trial for plunder, he remains an influential wild card in Philippine politics," it said.

It also said Estrada's popular appeal had remained steady since he left office.

"[News] of his medical condition still merit front-page stories," it noted.

The profile also related Estrada's recent daylong furlough, granted by the Sandiganbayan, as part of a possible "reconciliation" with the administration.

"Estrada was on his best behavior during the recent birthday celebration of Bro. Mike Velarde, El Shaddai charismatic leader," the profile said, adding:

"The court had extended a bit of sympathy, releasing the former leader for a medical checkup and 'reconciliation' gambit with the current administration."

The two leaders almost shared the stage for a possible symbolic handshake during the gathering at the Rizal Park, but Estrada allegedly delayed his arrival until Ms Arroyo had left.

Appeal

But the July 30 embassy report said Estrada would be more appealing if he started to represent a "wider" portion of the population.

"Estrada's appeal will be limited until he is seen as a more moderate option representing the interests of a wider swath of the electorate, besides the country's marginalized sectors or 'masa,'" it said.

The report quoted political experts as suggesting that "no successful extra-legal transfer of power has occurred without an obvious successor in place."

"Of those within Macapagal-Arroyo's formal coalition, or among like-minded politicians whose ambitions may tempt them to succeed [her], none has enough political backing or money to sustain a campaign to oust her," it added.

The report mentioned Sen. Panfilo Lacson, but noted that the perception of him was less than complimentary: "[D]espite his leadership role in the Senate, [he] is seen by various opposition factions as being out for his own interests and lacking the resources and [machinery] to unite the President's opponents."

Plots to seize power

In an April 14 report, prepared following the dismissal of the late Fernando Poe Jr.'s electoral protest against Ms Arroyo, the US Embassy said Malacañang was "jittery" about possible mass demonstrations purportedly to be staged by the opposition led by Estrada.

It also observed: "While few expected anything to come out of [Poe's electoral protest], many who supported Poe's candidacy believe that the dismissal of his case would lead to genuine public outpouring of affection and grief, and would revive memories of Poe's death (in December 2004)."

Farther on, the report said: "It is certainly in [the] Filipinos' interest to upend the Macapagal-Arroyo government and also put an end to the judicial cases against Estrada. Electoral reform, however badly needed, will go nowhere unless Filipinos want it—and fight for it."

Church . . .

From page A1

On the other hand, Makati Business Club Executive Director Guillermo Luz said rallies were expected when people were searching for the truth.

He said the junking on Sept. 6 of the impeachment complaints against Ms Arroyo prevented the resolution of the nation's political controversies. He said Filipinos who wanted a resolution of the crisis were now turning to the streets. He said he expected the rallies to continue.

Raul T. Concepcion, an industrialist and member of MBC's board of trustees, said protesters should go elsewhere or they should not occupy both lanes of Ayala Avenue.

"Many businesses have their headquarters in Makati and executives are saying the advantage of the location is lost when those working could not move from place to place because of the rallies," Concepcion said.

Conflicting Church views

Archbishops Oscar Cruz and Orlando Quevedo, both former presidents of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), yesterday gave contrasting positions on Malacañang's announced "preemptive calibrated response" to protesters.

Cruz all but predicted the downfall of Ms Arroyo if she suppressed street protests.

"Protest marchers, noise barrages, public rallies are but expression of exasperation," he said in a statement. "These are the effects—not the cause—of socio-political instability," he said.

"There are serious questions about the President's alleged lying, cheating and stealing," he told the INQUIRER. "But she responds to them precisely by not answering them."

Unless she allowed street protests, the bishop warned that Ms Arroyo might go the way of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Cruz said Malacañang's new policy would escalate violations of human rights.

"Such a response has already been tried before for so many Martial Law years," he said. "The ultimate result is history: As the then national leaders became weaker, the protest rallies became stronger. The leaders fell. The protests were safe and well."

Cruz reflected a minority view in the CBCP. Quevedo had a different opinion.

Ideological ploy

"To search for truth in the streets or through a so-called people's court seems to be mere political and even ideological ploy," the Cotabato archbishop said in a strongly worded statement.

"The many failed efforts to get people out into the streets demonstrate the weariness of people regarding the mixed political and ideological agenda of organizers and sponsors," he said. "People are indifferent and do not respond to the call of the opposition to go out into the streets."

Such indifference, he said, "may also mean that they may not totally believe in the so-called truth presented by the opposition."

Cruz didn't share Quevedo's criticism of a "people's tribunal," saying "It is but a move in search of truth in the felt absence of trusted government agencies to go for redress."

"It is false to claim that peaceful assemblies have neither any use nor direction," he argued. "It is also false to assert that any popular tribunal has no message or impact. They are pregnant with social relevance. They are people seeking answers to serious socio-moral questions."

Creative ways

Quevedo said legal experts should instead "come together and reflect on possible but creative ways by which the search for truth could be pursued in accordance with the rule of law and the Constitution."

Quevedo's statement echoed the Sept. 13 statement of the CBCP permanent council that encouraged the public to continue the search for truth while addressing the problem of grinding poverty in the country.

"All politicians must face this problem squarely," he said. "They have to act together to resolve the problem. To do this, they have to stop their political bickering and division."

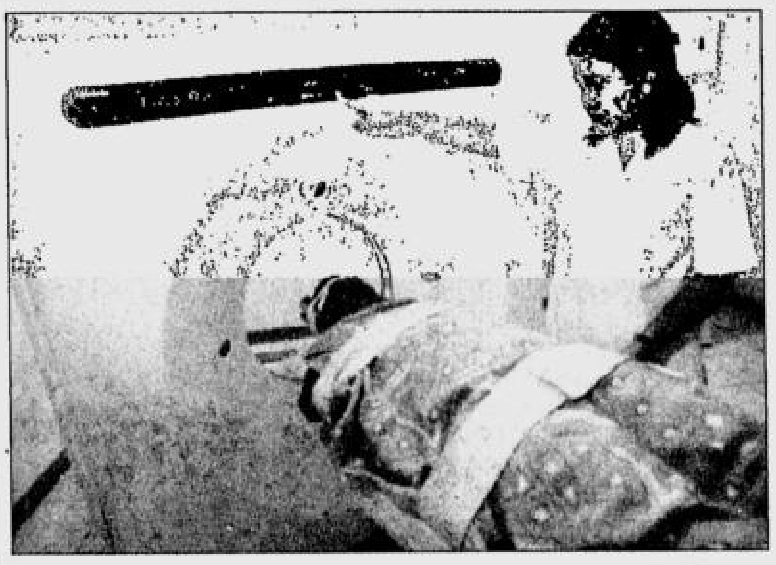
However, many religious groups differ from the CBCP stand. They are actively calling for the resignation of Ms Arroyo.

RTR Medical Foundation: Steadfast at 25

Doña Remedios Trinidad Romualdez school, hospital loyally serve Leyte-Samar

Thanks to one man's foresight—and to his sons' dedication—Region VIII has begun to ease the brain drain of doctors and nurses to the rich countries

By MIRIAM V. TORRECAMPO



A QUARTER-CENTURY OF RTR FOUNDATION. Clockwise from top: Dr. Jesus Reyes, medical director of the hospital and dean of the College of Medicine, with his executive assistant, Lyn de Vera (left) and Cheryl L. Chu, the hospital's assistant treasurer, on the hospital grounds; a patient gets a CT Scan; an anatomy class in the medical school; a patient getting a mammography examination.

A QUARTER of a century ago, one man foresaw a global trend that could prove detrimental to the poor countries—and decided to do something about it. The problem was not as acute then as it is now, but he had that 'vision thing.'

He saw clearly that the rich countries would more and more attract professionals from the poor countries—doctors, nurses and medical technicians among them.

He realized he could *not* stop these ambitious young people from leaving for what they regard as greener pastures. But he could fill the gap in the ranks of the health professionals who do remain—to stop the deterioration of basic health services and, perhaps, even to improve the doctor-per-population ratio.

How to do this? Build a medical school and encourage its graduates to practice in their home-province.

Now—a generation after he started out—the RTR Foundation is his living legacy to the people of Leyte- Samar.

The man is former Leyte Governor Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, and his legacy is the Doña Remedios Trinidad Medical Foundation, which marks its 25th anniversary this year.

The Foundation's motto is plain and simple: "Good basic health plays an important part in the preservation of our political and national integrity."

And RTR's record shows it is living up to this ideal.

Milestones in RTR's life

When in 1980, the then-Leyte Governor set up the Doña Remedios Trinidad Romualdez Medical Foundation to alleviate the "brain drain" of skilled health workers, many poor people in the Eastern Visayas died without even seeing a doctor.

In that same year, Romualdez founded the RTR Foundation's College of Medicine in Tacloban. Dr. Jesus Reyes, Dean of the Foundation's College of Medicine, recalls: "As early as 1990, we had begun to make an impact—to stabilize the supply of medical professionals in Leyte-Samar."

Technical and administrative support for the hospital comes from its partner hospital, the Makati Medical Center—which hosts fourth-year RTR medical students in Makati.

Apart from the medical school, RTR Foundation has opened courses in nursing (1984), physical therapy, medical technology, and biology (1994).

Since 1984, RTR has graduated more than 2,000 doctors and nurses. Nine out of ten of them practice either at RTR or at health facilities in Leyte and Samar.

Memorial hospital for a mother

In 1999, Governor Romualdez realized his dream to putting up a fully equipped tertiary hospital in Tacloban, which he dedicated to the memory of his mother.

RTR Hospital has recently established DOTS (directly-observed treatment short-course) programs in some barangays to supplement its free clinics for tuberculosis patients.

RTR also conducts specialist clinics. "Anybody with ailments that need the attention of a specialist physician can come on these days," says Dr. Reyes.

RTR Hospital maintains state-of-the-art facilities—radiology and x-ray machines, ultrasound testing, computed tomography scanning (CT Scan), mammography, ECG, 2-D echocardiography. A clinical lab is able to do blood chemistry, automated microbial identification and antibiotic sensitivity testing.

An annex will house dialysis and chemotherapy clinics. Aside from the standard emergency, maternity and surgical services, RTR has a intensive care unit for newly-born babies.

A regional center of excellence

Through the years, the Foundation has kept pursuing its goal of becoming a center of excellence for medicine. "We want RTR to become an accredited training hospital," said Dr. Reyes, who is a retired general surgeon.

Three years ago, RTR set up a masteral program in nursing—to enable its graduates to take up specialist studies. For school-year 2005-2006, RTR has enrolled 1,051 nursing students. The medical school has 129 students.

To qualify RTR to become a training hospital, the Foundation is building a three-story annex that will raise its capacity to at least 100 beds. An accredited residency training hospital prepares doctors to become specialists in the different medical disciplines—surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, endocrinology and so forth. Now, RTR doctors get specialty training at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center.

Graduates top medical exams

Up till last March, the Foundation has produced 1,102 doctors, 1,399 nurse graduates, five Masters in Nursing graduates, 650 medical technology graduates, 269 physical therapy graduates, and 268 biologists.

A good number of RTR graduates have placed in board examinations. Even the school's passing average is higher than the national norm.

Among more than 200 nursing schools all over the country, RTR's college ranked number 10 in 1996 and number eight in 1999. Recently, RTR was ranked the twentieth by the Professional Regulation Commission and the Commission on Higher Education. On average, 81 percent of its graduates pass the licensure tests.

In 1995, the Foundation set up the Dr. Vicente Orestes Romualdez Educational Foundation, named after Kokoy Romualdez's father; it manages a College of Law. This school year, the school has 324 students.

Up the ladder of mobility

RTR prides itself both in the quality of its instruction and in its dedication to its social role in Leyte-Samar. It sees itself as a crucial section of the ladder to upward mobility that education provides for the poor and the disadvantaged. To enable aspiring students from Leyte-Samar families to enter school—and to stay there—RTR awards scholarships, tuition discounts, study-now-pay-later schemes and part-time jobs to the most promising of them.

Many recipients of these awards have returned to work and teach at RTR. Twenty-year-old Chrislon David Gabiola, of Tacloban, who will graduate from nursing school this summer, plans to work and study abroad. But he intends to come home after 10 years, to teach at RTR. "I believe that one must return something they have gained to the place where they got it," he says. "And I'll come back for that reason." ■

THE ROMUALDEZ BROTHERS, BENJAMIN PHILIP AND FERDINAND MARTIN

Carrying on their father's work

THEY MAY BOTH have their hands full, running Metro Manila corporations. But both Benjamin Philip and Ferdinand Martin never forget they owe their first loyalty to the people of Leyte, whom their father led from 1967-86. 'Kokoy' Romualdez, 75, has retired from public life.

Philip is Vice-Chairman to his mother, the former Juliette Gomez, in the RTR Medical Foundation; Martin is the incoming President and chief executive officer of the Foundation, as well as the dean of its law school.

Philip, once a barangay captain in Tacloban, manages two large mining corporations. Martin was recently elected chair of Equitable PCIBank.

"We would like to continue building on the foundation laid by our father by strengthening the RTR's alumni network. The legacy we must build on is not just the physical structure but also the people it has nurtured.

"If we can induce these people to help us, then we would ensure the Foundation's viability over these next 25 years."

Initially, the young Romualdezes want to widen the doors of both their medical and law schools—to enable students from neighboring provinces to enroll. "We're also looking for specific areas of expertise, in various fields, that Leyte-Samar people can focus on," says Philip.

The next 25 years of RTR

They also plan to invest in state-of-the-art equipment for RTR Hospital. "If we get to do this, Leyte-Samar people will no longer need to go to Manila to get specialist attention."

Martin tracks the rising percentage of RTR graduates who pass government examinations. "They prove the quality of education we deliver is improving," he points out proudly. ■

People behind the RTR Medical Foundation

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RTR College Board Topnotchers

Doctors

1989 - Alvin L. Reyes, 12th
199⁴ - Romualdo M. Redona, Jr., 19th
1995 - Rosario Eclipse, 5th
1997 - Nelson P. Nicolasora, 5th
1998 - Juancho P. Estominos, 7th

Nurses

1988 - Elizabeth A. Segovia, 16th
1991 - Marilou B. Quintana, 1st place; Haydee Yutangco, 8th; Cecille P. Delgado, 10th; Lynn L. de Veyra, 11th; Rosalyn M. Aradillos, 9th
1992 - Arlene T. Solis, 17th
1993 - Louisa T. Camingao, 11th; Kim T. Onate, 13th; Sharon A. Segovia, 17th
1994 - Maruja Donna A. de Veyra, 19th
1995 - Cheryl Rose Ann B. Palencia, 17th; Barbara Ethel A. Perez, 20th
1996 - Marites C. Pulma, 7th; Mary Grace C. Tan, 13th; Angelina Donasco, 14th; Armi Lourdes B. Avila, 16th; Donald Docena, 17th; Allen T. Advincula, 18th; Aniceta Laput, 18th; Ma. Donna Palami, 18th; Angela Adora Tingzon, 18th; Ma. Alma Lajara, 19th; Judith Ayllon, 20th; Rhodella Fumar, 20th
1997 - Joyce Rosario Matoza, 10th; Amy Dacillo, 19th; Caryn L. Beringuel, 20th; Jibin S. Diaz, 20th
1998 - Gladys M. Talavera, 15th
1999 - Ma. Jonally O. Tecson, 20th

Graduates recall RTR's support

DR. MARY GRACE TAN-UY of Barangay Utap, Tacloban, recalls how RTR Foundation cared for them during the 2002 medical board examinations. "RTR billeted our batch in a pension in Cebu and hired reviewers who worked with us for two weeks. Our batch made it, 97-98%."

LEARNING ULTRASOUND TECH

Passion to heal

Kristie Rose Antonio dreamt of attending to the sick and needy. She has pursued that ambition—first at the RTR College of Nursing, and then in medical school. The child of a Tacloban postal worker, she avails of the discounts and deferred tuitions the Foundation awards to deserving students. She hopes to specialize in internal medicine.

Law student Jose Nick Mendros of Tacloban, for four arduous years, borrowed books from the law school library; twice he almost stopped studying for lack of money. The school registrar hired him as a library assistant to earn tuition money. The school's faith in the youth was justified: Nick passed the bar on his first try. ■

Bush rejects quick US pullout from Iraq

REMEMBER HER? US Army Pfc. Lynndie England after proceedings in her court-martial for abuse of Iraqi detainees, Sept. 22. AP

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH on Thursday rejected a growing chorus of calls for a swift US withdrawal from Iraq as he warned of escalating violence there ahead of an October constitutional referendum.

"Some Americans want us to withdraw our troops so that we can escape the violence," he said in remarks after getting a briefing at the Pentagon. "I recognize their good intentions, but their position is wrong."

Bush's comments came as he faced recent polls showing a collapse in popular support for the war and his handling of it, and as antiwar protestors planned a major demonstration for Saturday in Washington.

"Withdrawing our troops would make the world more dangerous and make America less safe. To leave Iraq now would be to repeat the costly mistakes of the past that led to the attacks of September the 11th, 2001," he said.

Bush said terrorists had drawn strength from what he called weak US responses to the 1979 hostage crisis in Iran, the Beirut Marine barracks bombing, the 1993 World Trade Center blast, the killing of US soldiers in Somalia, the attacks on two US embassies in Africa as well as the USS Cole.

"The terrorists concluded that we lacked the courage and character to defend ourselves, and so they attacked us. Now the terrorists are testing our will and resolve in Iraq," said the president. "Our withdrawal from Iraq would allow the terrorists to claim a historic victory over the United States."

Bush said Washington had increased its troop strength in Iraq ahead of an October referendum on the war-torn country's draft constitution and warned that extremists would escalate their attacks ahead of that political milestone.

"As Iraqis prepare to vote on their constitution in October and elect a permanent government in December, we must be prepared for more violence," he cautioned, adding that extremists sought "to set off a civil war."

Some 1,900 US troops have died in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion to oust Saddam Hussein, while recent polls show mounting support for quickly bringing home the roughly 140,000 US forces deployed there.

Bush also sharply criticized Syria, saying Damascus was doing too little to keep extremists from crossing the border into Iraq—a constant complaint from Washington ever since the war began.

"In order to secure a border, it requires cooperation on both sides of the border, and we're getting limited cooperation from Syria," he said. "Their response hasn't been very satisfactory to date."

Bush also shrugged off a question about how he could trumpet progress in the war on terrorism when Osama bin Laden, the chief backer of the Sept. 11 attacks, remained at large four years after he vowed to bring him to justice. *AFP*

Scientist says extreme storms due to warming

LONDON—A LEADING BRITISH scientist said on Friday the growing ferocity of hurricanes hitting the United States was very probably caused by global warming and criticized what he termed US climate loonies over the issue.

Sir John Lawton, chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution which advises the government, made what the Independent newspaper said was a thinly disguised attack on the stance of US President George W. Bush's administration.

"The increased intensity of these kinds of extreme storms is very likely to be due to global warming," Lawton told the newspaper in an interview.

"If this makes the climate loonies in the States realize we've got a problem, some good will come out of a truly awful situation," said Lawton.

Less than a month after Hurricane Katrina devastated large areas of the US Gulf coast, a new hurricane called Rita was roaring through the Gulf of Mexico toward the center of the US oil industry.

Climate change policies sharply divide Bush from many other world leaders who have signed up for caps on emissions of greenhouse gases under the UN's Kyoto protocol. Bush pulled out of Kyoto in 2001, saying it was too expensive and wrongly excluded developing nations from a first round of caps to 2012.

In July this year, Bush launched a six-nation plan to combat climate change with Australia, China, India, Japan and South Korea focused on a shift to cleaner energy technology. Unlike Kyoto, it stops short of setting caps on emissions.

Asked what conclusion the Bush administration should draw from two powerful hurricanes hitting the United States in quick succession, Lawton said: "If what looks like is going to be a horrible mess causes the extreme skeptics about climate change in the US to reconsider their opinion, that would be an extremely valuable outcome. *Reuters*

SMOKE and flames stream from the broken nose gear of a JetBlue Airbus 320 as it rolls out on its emergency landing at Los Angeles International Airport Sept. 21. AP

LA emergency landing seventh involving sideways nose gear

WASHINGTON—THERE HAVE BEEN AT least seven cases in which the front wheels on Airbus A320s became stuck in a sideways position, forcing pilots to make emergency landings.

No one was hurt in any of the landings, the latest of which occurred Wednesday night in front of a national television audience when a JetBlue plane touched down in Los Angeles amid smoke and sparks as the front tires disintegrated.

The incidents, unnerving to be sure, are nonetheless considered anomalies and have not prompted federal authorities to take action beyond ordering airlines to follow Airbus instructions for replacing rubber seals on the gear.

With about 2,500 Airbus A320s in operation worldwide, the number of incidents involving jammed nose gear is not significant, US Federal Aviation Administration spokesperson Greg Martin said Thursday. Airbus is produced by the European manufacturer EADS.

"It's a safe aircraft," he said.

Wednesday's emergency started soon after takeoff from Burbank, California, near Los Angeles, when the JetBlue A320 pilot noticed a caution light indicating a problem with the landing gear. He circled past the Long Beach Airport's control tower, where flight controllers saw that the nose wheel hadn't retracted and was twisted out of alignment.

The plane flew in circles for three hours to burn off fuel, then landed safely at Los Angeles International Airport, balancing on its back wheels as it rolled down the center of the runway.

The National Transportation Safety Board sent a team of investigators to determine what happened.

"Last night's incident concluded exactly as Airbus expected it would," Airbus spokesperson Mary Anne Greczyn said. "Flight crews are trained to handle such situations, and aircraft are designed to withstand such landings."

The A320 family—which includes the A318, A319 and A321—has a somewhat unusual landing gear that rotates before retracting into the fuselage.

"It's definitely not the most common way," said Chuck Eastlake, aerospace engineering professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. "The reason is that the ability of the nose wheel to rotate 90 degrees introduces the possibility of failure, exactly like what we saw."

In contrast, Boeing aircraft landing gear move straight up and down. *AP*

Vatican to bar gays, and even those with gay thoughts, from priesthood

VATICAN CITY—THE ROMAN CATHOLIC Church is about to ban men even suspected of latent homosexual tendencies from training as priests, sources close to the Vatican told AFP Thursday.

The sources said the Vatican will recommend mobilizing all the resources of modern psychology to weed out even those with homosexual thoughts.

Openly homosexual men already are barred from the priesthood, although this has not prevented gay scandals in several seminaries and an epidemic of priestly pedophilia.

Several specialized publications recently have alluded to a new document on priestly training intended for bishops and directors of seminaries, the Catholic training institutes.

A Vatican official said, however, that there were no plans to publish the document immediately.

But the measure has been under preparation for the past three years by the Vatican congregation for Catholic education, which is in charge of seminary training.

The congregation began drawing up the document after the issue of priestly pedophilia exploded in the United States.

The text reflects the view among some Catholics—but disputed by others—that the presence of gay clergy in the Church's ranks was to blame for the string of child abuse scandals.

Traumatized by unrelenting attacks by the media and victims, US Catholic bishops in 2000 issued new rules in Dallas, which among other things told bishops to "employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the fitness of candidates for ordination."

In 2002, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, then secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, declared that "people having a homosexual inclination should not be admitted into seminaries." The congregation was headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

About the same time, the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship published a recommendation that "a homosexual person, or one having a homosexual tendency, is not fit to receive the sacrament of ordination."

The Roman Catholic Church broke off its attempt to find doctrinal common ground with the Anglican communion in December last year following the appointment of an openly homosexual bishop by US Anglicans.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical council for the promotion of Christian unity, said on that occasion that it was no longer possible "to affirm that the moral principles that guide human sexuality were largely shared by Catholics and Anglicans." *AFP*

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WHO urges calm over Indonesia bird flu outbreak

JAKARTA—THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) on Thursday urged calm as Indonesia confirmed a new human case of avian influenza.

WHO health experts said the growing number of people with possible symptoms did not mean the outbreak was worsening.

They also said there was still no sign the virus could be passed easily among people.

Alarm has spread in populous Indonesia, where bird flu has killed four people and left 11 under observation in the capital.

Two others, both children, have also died but the government is awaiting results to confirm if the H5N1 virus killed them.

WHO said the Indonesian Health Ministry confirmed on Thursday a further human case of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. Investigations into other cases were continuing, it added.

"The case, in an 8-year-old boy, was confirmed as positive for H5N1 infection by a WHO reference laboratory in Hong Kong," the Geneva-based agency said in a statement. He remained in hospital in Jakarta, it added.

Georg Petersen, the WHO's Indonesia representative, said that despite the new cases, there is no evidence the H5N1 strain has mutated into a form that could trigger a pandemic.

Dr. Margaret Chan, the WHO's global special representative on avian flu, also said on Thursday there was no sign the virus had mutated into a form that could easily spread among people.

"So far there is no evidence for increased chance of human-to-human transmission," Chan told Reuters by telephone from Sydney after attending a WHO conference in Noumea, capital of New Caledonia in the South Pacific.

But Petersen said very close contact with a sick person might infect that caretaker.

"That is why in hospitals we need to take all precautions ... That would be in a way a human-to-human transmission, but that demands close, close contact," he said.

Petersen said the case of a father and his two daughters who died in the Tangerang suburb of Jakarta in July might have involved "within-family transmission."

Thailand had reported a probable case of human-to-human transmission in September 2004, when a 26-year-old woman died of bird flu after "prolonged face-to-face exposure" with her daughter, who was hospitalized with the virus.

All the confirmed and suspected cases have come from, or near, the capital Jakarta.

Chan said the rise in the number of suspected cases did not point to an epidemic.

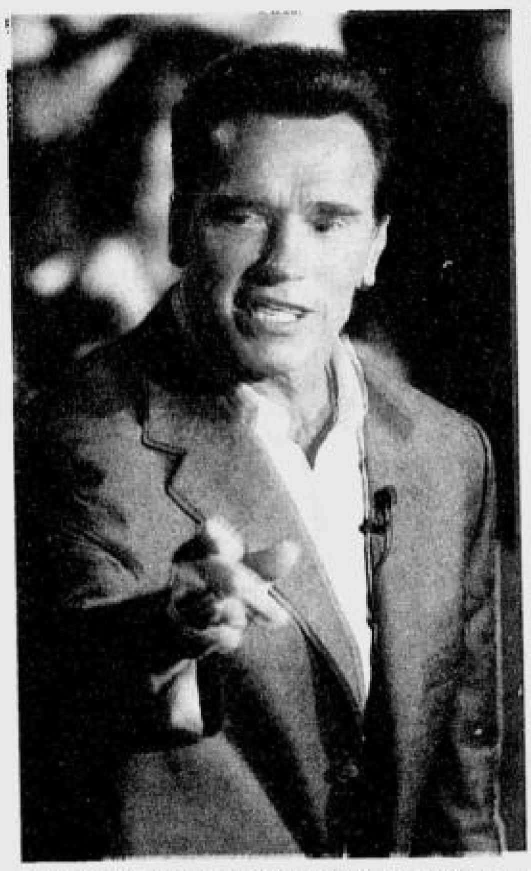
"With increased surveillance it's not unusual that you would pick up more cases," Chan said.

Bird flu has killed 64 people in Asia since 2003 and has since been found in birds in Russia and Europe.

Petersen said laboratory tests on people killed by bird flu in Indonesia showed they had the same or a similar virus that has killed millions of poultry in Asia.

"The tests from the 37-year-old woman ... so far that looks like the bird virus. So there is no reason to believe there has been any mutation so far," Petersen said of the fourth confirmed bird flu death in the country. *Reuters*

PARROTS for sale are displayed at a bird market in Jakarta, Sept. 23. AFP



CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger AFP

Beatty says Schwarzenegger Bush's stooge

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA—HOLLYWOOD movie star and liberal icon Warren Beatty lambasted Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at a California state nurses convention late Thursday, but insisted he didn't want to challenge him in next year's election.

"I have a day job," Beatty told the more than 500 nurses at a dinner in Oakland, across the bay from San Francisco. "I can make movies when I want to."

The event comes ahead of a special Nov. 8 referendum on several unpopular measures that Schwarzenegger supports, including have teachers rated by performance instead of tenure, and requiring politicians to balance the state budget without raising taxes.

Police, firefighters, nurses and teachers stand to be affected by the proposals.

Schwarzenegger, 58, announced on Sept. 16 that he will seek a second term as California governor when elections are held next year.

Beatty, 68, the star of "Bonnie and Clyde" and "Reds," accused "True Lies" star Schwarzenegger of arranging the November special election as a way to go on a fund-raising binge for reelection campaign cash.

He urged the nurses not to be passive "during this attempt to con the public with a hugely funded right-wing television campaign."

Nurses waved placards bearing the words "Stop Arnold" and chanted "Run, Warren, Run" as Beatty alternately skewered Schwarzenegger and the Republican administration of President George W. Bush.

"You and your tireless organizing have stood up to the arrogance of power and money and bullying and insulting disrespect of public servants and representative government and given this administration the massive enema it deserves," Beatty said.

Beatty upbraided the governor for not criticizing Bush's "mistaken gambles" of invading Iraq, not girding levees in Louisiana, and ignoring warnings that could have prevented the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Schwarzenegger was governing by "show spin, cosmetics, photo ops, fake events, fake issues and backdrops," Beatty charged.

"Being here allows me to make the case that not all aging, narcissistic movie actors whose children could be mistaken for their grandchildren necessarily act with the same motivation," Beatty said.

"We are going to terminate the Terminator," nurse Lolita Santos said. "Arnold is going down."

Beatty's actress wife, Annette Bening, and activist-actor Sean Penn were at the event along with the state's most powerful Democrat, John Burton, and Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, a former California governor.

Schwarzenegger won a special election for governor in October 2003 after his predecessor was voted out of office in a recall referendum. *AFP*

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OPINION

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Poor health

EDITORIAL

THE EXODUS OF DOCTORS AND NURSES TO high-paying jobs abroad has recently been described as a "national hemorrhage," a rather shrill cry, if only because the phenomenon is nothing new. If one considers that the Philippines has been exporting doctors and nurses abroad since the 1960s, then doomsday scenarios of the country's hospitals and clinics being packed with patients but emptied of doctors and nurses in the near future are just that—doomsday scenarios created by prophets of doom. There's really no need to sound the alarm anew because the alarm has been ringing all along.

Of course, a notable difference has occurred. More and more doctors are switching to nursing to land jobs abroad, especially in the United States where there is a dearth of nurses and care-givers in hospitals and nursing homes. Since doctors have undergone superior training, they seem to have a lock on the nursing positions while nursing graduates have to settle for care-giving slots and have to put in some more training and experience before they can become full-fledged nurses in the United States, with the requisite high pay and high regard. In fact, according to one study, 80 percent of government doctors are now enrolled in nursing schools nationwide hoping to land higher-paying jobs overseas.

Still some responses to the looming crisis have bordered on the alarmist. For example, the Alliance of Health Workers has called on the government to rescind the Philippine commitments to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade purportedly because the trade accord allows countries like the United States and the United Kingdom to lure Filipino local doctors and nurses to work abroad. The suggestion is obviously meant to strike a blow at the Uruguay Round, which is perceived as a capitalist ploy to promote the liberalization of trade in goods and services to the aggrandizement of industrialized countries and at the expense of developing nations.

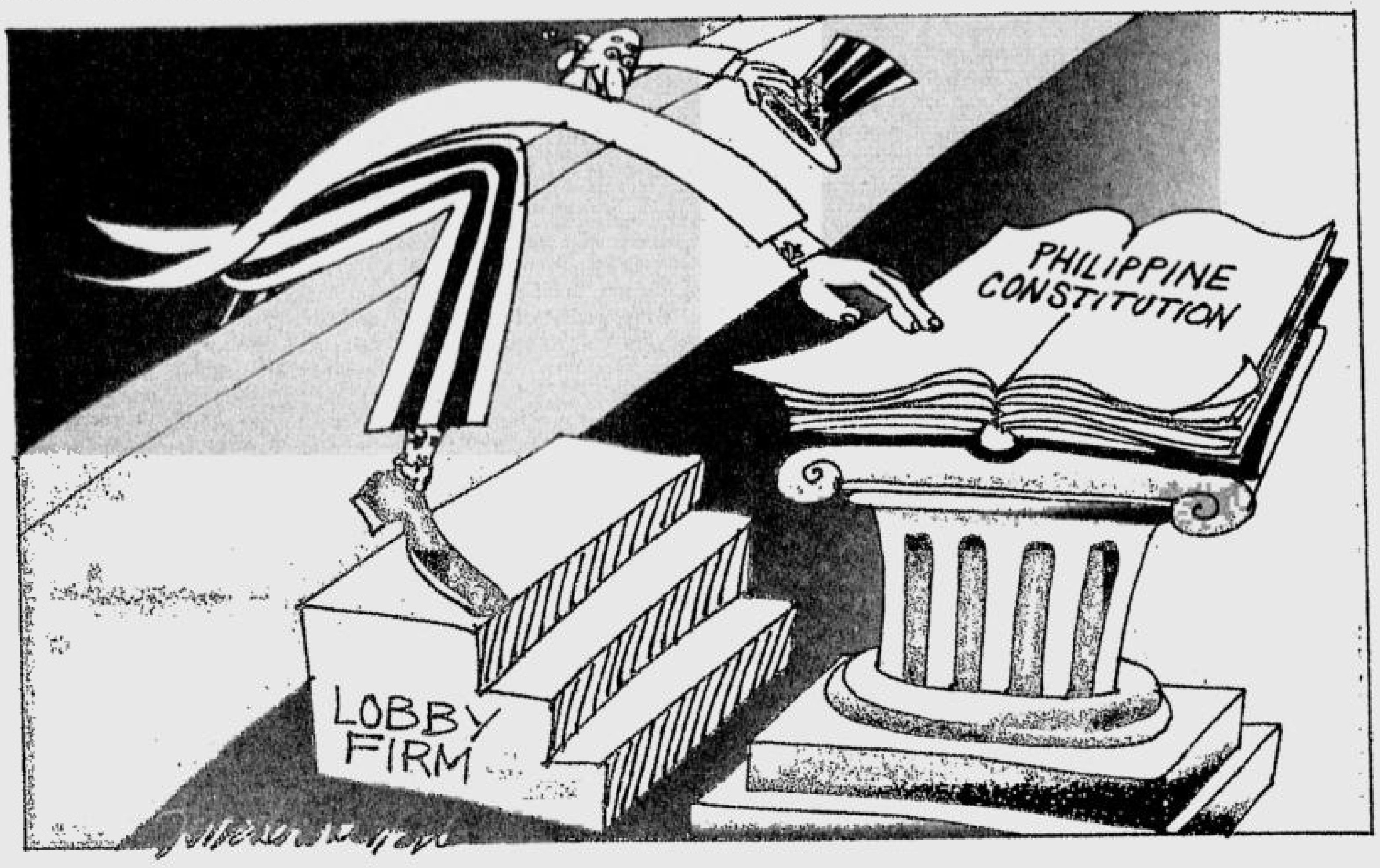
The exodus ought to be viewed with guarded optimism. While opportunities for gainful employment and professional advancement here remain scarce, the demand for health workers abroad can be considered as an opportunity for such professionals to earn a good, honest living for themselves and their families. At the same time, the situation could be viewed as another compelling reason to reform our health care system so that our country can retain the necessary number of health professionals and scientists by offering just compensation for their long years of studies and their labor.

The strong demand for health-care givers abroad is a mixed blessing for us. It gives an added push to a perceptible shift in our labor export from unskilled or semi-skilled workers to professional and highly skilled workers. But at some point, this shift from brawn drain to brain drain could cost the nation and our people dearly.

Our doctors and nurses have long enjoyed a reputation of warm and expert care around the world. The increased demand for them merely reaffirms the global renown and respect they enjoy. And their growing number abroad means increased dollar remittances to the national economy.

This increased overseas demand for our doctors and nurses seems likely to be sustained for decades, as Western countries, such as Japan, face the prospect of a demographic winter on account of an aging population. Faced with this reality, the Philippines should make sure that the needs of its own health system are not compromised. Our policymakers should start looking for ways to keep our hospitals and clinics fully staffed and running. For a start, they might consider requiring graduates of state medical and nursing schools to render service in government hospitals and clinics for a number of years. The health care system should be overhauled so that people will have greater access to medical care and private hospitals and clinics don't come to ruin because patients cannot pay for their services. The reform of the system should also ensure better compensation for medical and health workers. In the long run, an improvement in the quality of our health services and facilities could support a campaign to promote "medical tourism," where foreign patients seek treatment in local hospitals.

In the meantime, the government should ensure quality education by clamping down on substandard schools offering medicine, nursing and related courses. Quality education will ensure a steady supply of capable doctors, nurses and other health workers here and abroad while enhancing the reputation of the Philippines as a global center of health education and a regional center of medical treatment and health care.



The society pages

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

IN ITS LETTERS DEPARTMENT, NEWSWEEK recently reported: "Readers took issue with our July 25/Aug. 1 Special Report on the global luxury market, given 'the millions of children and adults living in poverty,' as one said. Another called the article 'obscene,' and one questioned the meaning of a 'good life': 'Isn't the good life about being good?'"

A reader from Kenya suggested: "Try buying books for a village instead. And then visit the school each year to see different children reading the books. Or choose to do anything else in a way that you can lead the truly 'good life.'"

A Frenchman said: "We have always known that rich people exist. How they choose to divert themselves with gaudy trinkets or overpriced vacations is of no interest to the rest of the world. And Newsweek calls this 'the good life'?"

From Spain came the biting comment: "The rich may be getting richer, but the poor are still poor. What's more, by anyone's reckoning, their needs should certainly be more pressing than the desire for a $32,000 mobile phone or to feel 'pampered and unique' during an even more exclusive shopping experience or vacation getaway."

As a subscriber to the magazine for more than four decades, I was also disappointed by its rather fawning admiration for the extravagant rich. Its report on destitution in the United States in its Sept. 10 issue might have been its answer to the conscience-reproaching question: "Isn't 'the good life' about being good?"

The article was not especially distasteful to me, however, because we see articles and pictures of the same kind in our own country. The society pages are an essential and indispensable part of our newspapers, including the major dailies. They easily outnumber the pages for the news, the editorial comments, new government rules, the daily peso exchange rate, and other useful information.

The society pages are for the reading and seeing pleasure of the rich, the not so rich, and especially the poor. The first two groups expect their caprices and ostentations published for the admiration of their easily impressed fans. Some even pay for the publicity. The poor also read about the costly pleasures of the privileged so they can also enjoy them at least vicariously.

The society pages are where you can see colored pictures of million-peso weddings with the bride and groom attended by their equally richly-attired ensemble. The bride, who is not necessarily beautiful even with trying-hard make-up, will be wearing a costly gown designed by a pansy couturier; the groom will be opulent if not handsome or a potential heir of also squandered wealth. They will have some six or a dozen sets of sponsors, most of them from the higher levels of government or business. The cost of the also flaunted reception could feed a starving barangay.

Even the couples celebrating their golden wedding anniversaries engage in similar braggadocio and spend even more than they did when they first exchanged marriage vows. They are more prosperous now and have more fortune to display. The *Lola* wears an elegant terno, pure-white as when she was an innocent virgin, and her exhausted partner has less hair now but more paunch. The grandchildren are either ring bearers or junior bridesmaids, and all must join the family picture to be published in the society pages.

The phrase "society pages" is a generic term to describe the excessive surplusage in the newspapers, especially on week-ends, announcing the flamboyant lifestyles of the rich and famous; also include the not so rich but also want to be famous. The ladies will be photographed in exquisite dresses and the gentlemen in the latest style barongs for the admiration of their yokel devotees. Coming-out parties of debutantes are now passé, replaced with foreign travels, but the "rigodon" is still shuffled by the over-aged and are also dutifully published by the society editors. The purpose may be to show that the oldies are also successful in other youthful attempts.

Many foreign newspapers do not have society pages, unlike our local dailies, where they are needed to make the ordinary reader's day. He (better still, *she*) must know who is engaged to whom, who were wed yesterday, that Madam X's marriage has been canonically annulled to enable her to marry Mr. Y, who has been divorced from Mrs. Z. The Mayabang Club will hold its anniversary dinner on Sunday at the Magastos Hotel with Senator Suplada as guest of honor. All these happenings as reported in the society pages are part of the culture of our people.

Much of the things one can read in the society pages are frivolous and mostly deceptive, but no legislator has attempted to prohibit them as distractive of the nation's serious efforts to solve our many difficult problems. The society pages, as trivial as they may be, and even harmful, are protected by freedom of expression, which covers not only the thought that agrees with us but also, according to Justice Holmes, the thought that we abhor. The bottom line is that we're stuck with the society pages, have become woefully used to them, and the *chismosas* even love them. *Ciao!*

Moving on

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

A VERY DEAR FRIEND CALLED ME UP A couple of days ago. "I want you to be the first to know," she began, and I tensed, thinking that there was a health problem involved. She must have noticed the anxiety in my voice, so she immediately assured me that it had nothing to do with her health—her physical health, that is.

"R" (she doesn't want to be identified) is a concerned, committed citizen, a Filipina who loves her country unashamedly, and puts her money where her mouth is. She and her husband have invested in the Philippines, providing gainful (and well-paid) employment to probably more than a thousand people, earning foreign exchange in the process. She contributes her time, energy and money to causes she considers worthy. She is a citizen who more than carries her weight in society and the economy.

She is not a Gloria-lover, but after a lot of soul-searching, she decided to vote for her in the presidential elections last year, just as after a lot of soul-searching, I decided not to vote for her. We had long discussions about our respective choices, particularly because that was the first time we had disagreed on a political issue. In the end, we agreed to disagree.

She was abroad when the tape scandal broke out, but the Internet allowed her to follow what was happening, not to mention the many long-distance conversations she had with various friends and colleagues (courtesy of Skype)—an indication of her concern.

For three months, even after she returned, she continued weighing the issues. She wanted to listen to all sides (including mine), but she could not make up her mind. I respected her indecision. I knew where she was coming from: she had no personal axes to grind, she was thinking of what would be best for the country, and, of course, the whole thing was so depressing.

So she called to tell me what her decision was: Let's continue to find out the truth but, in the meantime, let's move the country forward. Paralyzing it is not the solution.

What made her finally stop sitting on the fence? Here is what she said, to the best of my recollection:

"I'm caught in this humongous traffic jam at 2 o'clock in the afternoon in the Makati business district, unable to move one way or another. And I see a sign, saying 'GLORIA MUST GO'—and it's as if everything cleared up in my mind. These people want her out even if they bring down the country to do it.

"No way am I going to join that group. I have a client coming in next week, who is deciding on whether to transfer his business to the Philippines or stay where he is. I am trying my damnedest to convince him to set up here, and how am I going to explain this mindless, or worse, deliberate attempt to put sand in the gears of economic life?

"It dawned on me that it is not Gloria who is causing harm to the economy, it is these people, who don't care that they are disrupting business activities, they are making it difficult for people to make a living, they are reducing productivity—all because they are obsessed with getting their own way.

"Why should I march with them? How many of these people walking the streets were living it up during the Estrada and the Marcos administrations? It seems that, to them, nothing she does is right. They won't even give the time of day to acknowledge the advances that have been made. Black and White. What nonsense.

"Yet they can't come out with the hard evidence. I've been waiting, and all I hear is innuendo, *chismis*, grandstanding. I'm not defending her or her minions. If they get enough solid evidence against her, so be it—she should go. But they haven't so far. And they won't get it by marching in the streets. So they should work harder, instead of behaving like kids having tantrums because they couldn't get their way.

"Those in the opposition have a great role to play. They keep the administration on its toes. They fiscalize. Wonderful. They should do that. It is great for the nation, it is great for democracy. But it is one thing to be a watchdog to keep the house safe, and another thing to destroy the house in the process. Which is what they are doing. They're throwing the baby out with the bath water. Enough!"

But my friend R also has some very constructive suggestions for the anti-Gloria group as well as everyone who agrees with the bishops' advice that the search for truth should be done hand in hand with moving the country forward:

"We are interested in reforming the country, getting rid of graft and corruption, and making sure the law is obeyed? So why don't we start within our own spheres of influence? In our homes, for example, have we enrolled our domestic helpers with the SSS, and do we pay their dues? In our communities, are we active in our barangays and in our civic organizations?

"Butch Abad was with the Department of Education. Why doesn't he spend his time monitoring what they are doing, and making sure his successor is not allowing the department to sink back into a morass of corruption. Liway Chato's expertise is with the BIR. Why doesn't she do the same thing in that sector. Then they will be truly serving the country.

"And when we look at ourselves, can we please stop the bad habit of assuming that if we break the law, it is all right, but when others break the law, they must be punished? We must improve ourselves before we can be effective in improving our society and our country."

Go, girl.

Just do it

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MANY CITIZENS WERE GLAD TO HEAR PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo telling columnist Max Soliven, in an interview upon her arrival from the United Nations, that she is "ready to move on and push her economic recovery efforts." GMA expects the political turmoil of the past many months to continue because of the "degenerated" political system and our "poison politics," but she vows to remain focused and undistracted from her anti-poverty program as well as the reforms in governance, especially against corruption and raising badly needed revenues.

Doubtless GMA was referring to the various exposés trying to implicate her and the opposition's move to impeach her, which was killed in the House of Representatives earlier this month. All this had kept her off-balance and distracted the nation frightfully.

She's right in focusing her energies on moving the nation forward. To paraphrase the Good Book, the opposition will always be with us, and given the kind of people in its ranks, it may be wishful thinking that it would be constructive or that it would give up trying to oust her. But the people will see through its schemes and will not join its attempts to mount another people power revolt. Note how thin the crowds were after the impeachment was killed in the House and last Wednesday, the anniversary of martial law.

* * *

What people want, however, is for GMA to get started even with little things they can immediately see and feel. They are realistic enough to know that a big difference in the lives of the poor won't come in the immediate future, but they want some things done right away. For instance, some weeks back there was a Palace order to sell government luxury gas-guzzlers in order to raise revenues. The people cheered this, but nothing has been heard about it since then. Those vehicles should be immediately sold in a public auction.

Then, too, AO 103 was issued last year reducing the remuneration and perks of government-owned and controlled corporations, but there has been only token compliance.

* * *

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles has sought to explain National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales' privately funded contract with a Baltimore-based lobby group by saying that the firm could assure foreign investors that Charter change won't affect business contracts. I can see some merit in that argument, but it's still difficult to see why millions of pesos should be wasted on a lobby group operating abroad. It's the Filipinos first and foremost who have to be convinced about the merits of a shift to the parliamentary/federal system of government. Such funds, if indeed they are available, could be better used in a massive educational campaign among our people, for their ignorance of the proposed system constitutes the biggest obstacle to the much-needed shift.

* * *

Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya, chair of the House appropriations committee, did a big public service by revealing the failure of civil society groups to account for P4.8 billion in government assistance and grants last year. What's alarming is that this is becoming a bad habit with some NGOs and people's organizations. In 2003, they also failed to liquidate some P3 billion in grants and assistance.

Andaya pointed out that NGOs and POs have been very quick to accuse government of lack of transparency in spending, but "it seems they are not practicing what they preach." He noted that some NGOs may actually be fly-by-night operations, although "some of them may just have been overwhelmed by paper work" so that they failed to account for the funds. Without proper accounting, he said, any expense of public funds is "irregular."

Note that Inquirer columnist Victor Agustin had pointed out that the foundations that resigned Cabinet members Dinky Soliman and Teresita Quintos Deles either headed or were involved in had received millions of pesos in government funds for which they still have to make an accounting. One thing bothers me: How come various departments freely disbursed billions in government funds to NGOs and POs and didn't press for an accounting? The report noted, for instance, that the Department of Social Welfare and Development, which Soliman headed for four years, had released P203 million to NGOs that remained unaccounted for as of Dec. 31, 2004. One reason for rampant corruption in government is the very loose accounting process in many agencies.

* * *

This column has sought to give the reasons for the failure of the impeachment move in the House. Among them were the one-year bar in the Constitution, the inclusion of so many extraneous issues in the amended complaint, the behavior of some opposition members, the failure to convince the majority that the Garci tapes constituted strong evidence of election fraud, and the lack of credibility of some opposition leaders. Another reason was that the majority of congressmen saw that the ouster of GMA would pose a bigger problem, since the groups pushing for her impeachment had different agendas. This was evident from their varied proposals regarding who would take over, such as a transitional council, a revolutionary council, a military junta, etc. Moreover, it was clear that those who wanted to take over either have lost in the elections or cannot be elected even as barangay captain.

One common denominator was their low regard for Vice President Noli de Castro. Eventually the opposition realized its mistake and some of them, like former President Cory Aquino, said they would consider the Vice President as the constitutional successor. But by then, it was too late. The members of the majority bloc had made up their minds to stick with GMA. As Romblon Rep. Eduardo Firmalo put it, "GMA represents stability."

Thanks, MiG

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE PAST MANY WEEKS, WE MANAGED TO bridge the generation gap in our household by way of a TV show: "Rock Star INXS." You guessed it, we were one in cheering for our very own MiG Ayesa, who grew up in Australia and is now based in London but has been embraced by the Filipino nation, having been born here to Filipino parents.

What made us Pinoys root for MiG was the fact that from the very start he made no bones of his Filipino roots and readily gave interviews to Filipino journalists, sharing memories of holidays spent in the country with his grandparents and cousins. Of course, it helped, too that MiG was one fine performer, eating up the stage and managing the difficult rock material with aplomb. No wonder MiG consistently rated well, never landing in the bottom three until the penultimate show.

Early in the series, MiG performed "We Will Rock You" by Queen and, of course, given that he had performed in a staging of the life of Queen lead man Freddie Mercury, he nailed it without too much difficulty. So when Suzie, who was part of the final four, chose to perform "Bohemian Rhapsody," Queen's and Mercury's signature piece, we were sorely disappointed. We had been anticipating MiG's "cover" version, especially curious about how his performance would measure up against that of Constantine, one of "American Idol's" finalists.

So you can imagine how excited we were Wednesday when MiG chose, from a list of all the songs performed in the show, "Bohemian Rhapsody" for the finale. As MiG would later say, he knew he was taking a risk with "Bohemian" as it could further underscore his theater roots, which the band members had been concerned about. But no matter, he blew us away. "Constantine who?" my son guffawed at the end of MiG's fiery performance.

I suspect that INXS had early on decided that MiG was too "nice" and well-adjusted to qualify as an edgy rocker, an image the band needs to project to young fans, but couldn't drop him because Filipinos and Australians—among the most text-savvy people on earth—were consistently voting for him. Nice guys don't always finish last, MiG, but thanks for always giving your audience a good show, and giving us one more reason to root for a Pinoy!

* * *

CREATING buzz, and not always the positive kind, is the new reality show "Pinoy Big Brother." Shortly after the show was launched, I tuned in mainly out of curiosity but was soon bored out of my skull.

Friends, however, told me that in the weeks since the show's launching, more people have begun following the show, mainly in anticipation of any more "juicy" revelations from the residents, who've taken to discussing—fully aware that they're being watched by the rest of the country—such secrets as how old they were when they first had sex, and whether they enjoyed prolonged "making out," as in foreplay, before they got down and dirty.

One couple who have gotten romantically entangled in the course of the show, which is pretty obvious since they're eternally entangled in each other's limbs, was, so gossip goes, even caught on camera in a well, compromising position(s).

The MTRCB has recently entered the picture, imposing a one-day ban (not much of a punishment, given that "PBB" is a daily show) as a penalty for the show's R-rated material. I'm usually averse to censorship, but in this instance, I must agree with the board. So pervasive is TV's presence in the home, and so accessible is it to children, that producers should be extra cautious about the contents of a prime-time show.

My curiosity piqued anew, I decided to tune into "PBB" a few nights ago and was struck by the sheer ennui of life in that house. The girls, for instance, seemed to do nothing but stand in front of a mirror and brush or iron their hair. It's not erotica or immorality we should worry about with "PBB," it seems, but boredom, showing us how vacuous our lives really are.

* * *

I NEVER really "got" my daughter's obsession with "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," until, surfing the channels, I caught one of the "Buffy" episodes on an endless loop on Star TV, and was enchanted. It was a "musical," with original songs by none other than "Buffy" creator Joss Whedon. Not only were the tunes memorable, but the lyrics were also quite clever and even touching. And the send-ups of various musical genres were outright amusing.

Well, seems there's no end to Whedon's cleverness. Early this week, mainly on our "slayer's" urging, we commuted all the way to Greenbelt 3 for a sneak preview of "Serenity," a sci-fi adventure film based on a short-lived series created by Whedon called "Firefly."

Set in the far future, "Serenity" tells the tale of the intrepid freelance crew of a fighter ship of the same name, and their battles against the Republic, which has managed to bind an entire galaxy by wiping out the "humanity" of the inhabitants. Written and directed by Whedon, "Serenity" is fast-paced and filled with enough special effects to send the typical "Star Wars" fan into paroxysms of joy.

But it's the clever script that's the real star, and the audience at the sneak preview, most of them "Slayers" or members of fantasy fan groups, were quite vocal in their appreciation. And I must admit, "Serenity" is in parts quite clever and ironic, breaking conventions of movie dialogue.

"Serenity" has been scheduled for showing here early next year, although it will open in the next week or so in the United States and elsewhere. If there's enough "buzz" about it here, distributors might consider an earlier screening. So consider this a plug for a movie that's not only worth your while, but gives a creative genius the platform he deserves.

Talents

YOUNG BLOOD

Candice Christine Oh Tongco

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

TALENT IS DEFINED BY THE WEBSTER DICTIONARY AS the natural endowments of a person. It is the innate ability to do something well.

When I was a kid, there were three talents that I wanted most: to be good in math, to have a good singing voice and to be able to draw well.

Lucky people possess all three. Others have two, and some have one. However, there are still others who have not even one of these talents, and their number includes me.

I grew up thinking that math was something essential and inescapable so I thought that being a math wizard would give me an edge in everything I set out to do. I tried to love math with all my heart and mind. I practiced for long hours, especially before my exams.

At first, I thought I was doing great, but as I advanced to the next level in school, mathematical problems became real problems for me, causing me so many frustrations. I started getting mediocre grades in the subject, and it wasn't long before I acknowledged that not everything could be achieved through hard work. People who are good in math are really blessed with a special gift. Despite all my efforts, math couldn't love me back. I was heartbroken.

I grew up watching the boob tube, which was obviously intended to provide entertainment. I would watch people singing on various shows and this gave me the impression that if only I could sing, then I could be the next big star. So every night, I would sing in the bathroom or rather try to sing in the bathroom, hoping against hope that I would develop that golden voice just waiting to be discovered by talent scouts.

Soon after I started this exercise, my brothers and parents began pleading with me to stop singing and just keep my mouth shut. It did not take long before I accepted that singing and I were not really meant for each other.

I grew up reading story books with stunning illustrations and I wished I could also draw my own masterpieces and publish them in the future. However, among all the three talents I most wanted to have, this one was the first I gave up on because it was very easy to see that the dog I painted looked like a rat. However, it still hurt me to watch my classmates join drawing contests in school, something which I could never do.

I used to wonder what were God's criteria in choosing the children whom He would endow with special talents and why I never got any of them. Perhaps I was not really one of His favorites. I thought the three talents I most wanted were the keys to success. After all, math quiz bees, singing contests and drawing exhibits weren't being held for no reason at all.

I used to think all these but not anymore. No, I still haven't figured out what my talent really is. In fact, I'm not even sure if I have any. But I know it would be foolish to reduce a person's intrinsic worth to a mathematical equation. It is unrealistic to judge the merits of a person by his voice quality, and it is wrong to measure the capabilities of a person only by how he makes strokes with his hands. I think I will be happy and content to prove to the world that I can succeed and reach greater heights without being a master of numbers, without having a lovely voice and without being able to draw an apple that doesn't look like an orange.

Candice Christine Oh Tongco, 16, is a first year BS Legal Management student at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Thinking ahead

Aimee Louise Sison

SINCE I WAS STUDYING AT THE INTERNATIONAL School, it was always assumed that I would eventually leave the Philippines to pursue my college education abroad.

When I was younger, I looked to this promise with optimism and hope. As the years passed, I realized it would take serious studying and dedication to earn my place in an American university. From then on, I set about this goal with determination. But now, on the eve of my departure, I see the journey ahead with a mixture of excitement, apprehension and even fear.

I have always thought of myself as a brave person. However, as I ponder my future outside the Philippines, I find my fears steadily growing. I fear the unknown. How will I survive in a place where I know no one? More importantly, how will I survive away from the comforts of home?

To overcome my own fears, I have stopped thinking about leaving. Skipping the many steps ahead, I've decided to think about my return.

My friends assume that once I leave, I will not return. A few weeks ago, when I told an acquaintance that I was off to the United States for college, he said, "Too bad. The country keeps losing our young intellectuals." To him, it was as though I was not only foregoing a Filipino education, but abandoning the Philippines entirely.

This, however, is farthest from the truth. Yes, I am off to the States. Yes, I will be there for all four years of my college education. But I do not intend to relocate there. I intend to return home to Manila.

This is my home: The large and crowded city with its large and crowded malls. The imperfectly paved roads complete with the frustrating traffic jams and the sampaguita vendors. The pink MMDA fences and the standing room only MRT. Shopping at the *tiangge* where the prices are always negotiable and accompanying my mother to the *palengke* where the produce is always fresh.

While Americans may drive on smoother roads and have wider selections in their groceries, they will never comprehend why I crave cheese-flavored ice cream bought from a street vendor. The United States may be the most powerful country in the world, but it is not mine.

I worry about the country I am leaving behind. The exchange rate has been hovering around P56 to $1. Half of the population struggle to survive, and we have the three-ring circus of our politicians. With every day that passes, I worry more and more about our nation. Is this what I'm leaving behind? Is this what I'll be returning to?

Yet, rather than forcing me to make my absence a permanent one, these are the very reasons I must return—in the hope that with a foreign education, I will be able to look at the domestic situation with a fresh vision and possibly come up with fresh solutions to some of these problems.

So as my departure date approaches, I stop thinking of everything Filipino as things I'm leaving behind. I think of them as things I will be returning to. Even before I knew I would be leaving, I had already planned my return. For as Dorothy said, "There's no place like home."

Aimee Louise Sison, 18, graduated recently from the International School Manila and will be studying mass communications at the University of California, Berkeley.

Catastrophes and Calamities

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

WITH THE TSUNAMI, KATRINA AND NOW RITA (which has been upgraded to a category 5 hurricane), it's little wonder that we may be feeling a tad water-logged and disaster-prone, especially as they affect the price of oil. It's not as though these fair isles haven't had their share of disasters. For friars and foreign government representatives to actually take note and report on our country's various natural calamities, they must have been indeed awesome.

Here is Manila in October 1820: On Oct. 1 to 2, a violent typhoon occurs. On Oct. 4, Taal erupts, followed by an earthquake with the waters of the lake and river overflowing. On the 6th, a cholera epidemic breaks out, with 200 people dying daily. This is blamed on foreigners poisoning the water, a rumor supposedly instigated by friars frightened of foreign influences. It results in rioting by a frightened people and the massacre of 39 Europeans. The Chinese are blamed, but the troops are only called in when the houses of the Spaniards are threatened. The foreigners are buried without religious ceremony, convincing the rioters that they were right in their assumptions.

Even if the New Year is a happy occasion celebrated in all Christendom as holy and the beginning of the century in the Philippines, the year 1600 was considered unlucky, fatal on sea and land because of earthquakes, the loss of galleons, invasion by the "heretical" Dutch and Moro raids.

It was the second time that the Jesuit church was ruined. The previous year on June 1, 1599, the church was destroyed. The earthquakes of 1599 and 1600 weren't as painful as the later ones, which led the people to construct buildings with ground floors of stone and 2nd floors of wood now known as *bahay na bato*.

In the earthquake of 1599, the roof of the nave of the Jesuit church which was then only made of palm and cane collapsed. Two collateral naves cracked as well. Fr. Pedro Chirino, who was rector at the time, wrote that at midnight the tremor struck, so cruel, furious and long, lasting nearly seven minutes. The good friars thought it was the end of the world and that Judgment Day had come.

Chirino was awakened by the rattling of the latches of the doors and windows. Since they had experienced smaller earthquakes throughout the year, he at first didn't move. It was only when he felt the strong swaying of the house that he jumped out of bed and took refuge in the aperture of the door. It was similar, he wrote, to the motion of a vessel at sea when it rises and falls from prow to stern and sways back and forth without his being able to say anything beyond, *"O, Poderoso Dios."*

In the city, some buildings were destroyed and a few people were hurt but only one died. In the Jesuit church, the damage was extensive because the two domes of the collateral naves split and destroyed a large portion of the Gospel side and pulverized all the facing of the walls in the main chapel. It became necessary to re-putty and reinforce her anew. The other nave where the relics were stored cracked but did not collapse even with the convent wall separating slightly.

In the aftermath of this disaster, Fr. Juan de Ribera preached that it made sense to choose a saint as public advocate for earthquakes and to devote a day each year as a feast day, following the example of Sta. Potenciana, advocate against hurricanes and storms. The saint could intercede for God to spare them such great tribulation and danger.

Ribera discussed his idea with the other religious leaders and officials of the Cabildo (City Hall) of Manila so that, with the archbishop, they could decide on a day and place for the celebration of a sung Mass, followed by a procession where the image could be borne. The Jesuits even offered one of their chapels to be used for the statue. They would keep the image on an altar and decorate it on the day of the feast so that it could be celebrated with all solemnity. The procession would thus start from their church.

The Cabildo and the acting archbishop accepted the proposal. A day was chosen and in the cathedral, D. Gabriel de la Cruz, the second dean of Manila, had the honor of taking the urn where various pieces of paper with the names of saints were placed. Picked was the name of San Policarpio, Martyr, Bishop of Esmirna, whose feast day fell on Jan. 26. A solemn Mass was celebrated where D. Gabriel himself sang, followed by a procession. The election was held in April 1601, which was more or less the same time that the Apostolic See in Rome placed this illustrious martyr in the breviary.

The Company, conforming with the result of the selection process, took him as the patron for earthquakes and dedicated a chapel to him and installed his statue on a beautiful altar with letters of gold composed by Fr. Angelo Armano saying: "*Alme senex, Polycarpe, novos tutare clientes: Sistat & auxilio terra quieta tuo.*" (Rough translation, courtesy of Fr. Ted Torralba of the Nunciature: Dear Old Man Polycarpe, your new devotees seek your favor and ask your assistance in keeping the earth still.)

From that time, the feast day of San Policarpio was celebrated in the cathedral on that day, and in the Jesuit church the following Sunday there was a veneration of his relic that Rome had sent.

(Data from P. Francisco Colin, Labor Evangelica, 1660, Vol. II, edited by P. Pablo Pastells, 1904)

La Mesa safe from Payatas dump

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO REY Palacio's query regarding the possible contamination of the drinking water of Metro Manila residents with leachate from the Payatas dump. (Letters, PDI, 9/6/05) We appreciate his concern. Let him be assured that the issue has been addressed by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) several years ago.

To ascertain that the water stored in La Mesa is safe for human consumption, the MWSS conducted several studies relative to the effects of the Payatas dump on the La Mesa Dam and Reservoir, to wit:

- "Effects of Payatas Dumpsite Study," conducted by the National Hydraulic Research Center (NHRC) of the University of the Philippines: Its findings revealed there is no way the leachate coming from the dump will contaminate the water at the La Mesa Reservoir for the following reasons:

a. The La Mesa Reservoir is located at a higher elevation, 52 M amsl (above mean sea level), Payatas dump is 38 M amsl.

b. The Modflow Model used by the NHRC in the simulation for the groundwater flow revealed that the La Mesa Reservoir recharges to the groundwater flow going to the dump area, which can be traced to the dam's seepage.

- The La Mesa Dam Seepage Study being conducted by the Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWCI), in cooperation with the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI): Preliminary findings reveal there is no relationship between the nature of chemicals (water quality) found in the monitoring wells in the Payatas area and the nature of chemicals found in the monitoring wells inside the La Mesa Reservoir. These results lead to the conclusion that there is no contamination of water in the La Mesa Reservoir, which is coming from Payatas.

We would therefore like to assure the concerned public that the possibility of Payatas' contaminating the La Mesa Reservoir is very remote at present, as shown in the various findings of the above-mentioned studies.

—MACRA A. CRUZ,
acting administrator,
Metropolitan Waterworks
and Sewerage System, Katipunan
Road, Balara, Quezon City

Reforms also needed in the Church

THIS IS A REACTION TO A NEWS story headlined "CBCP urges clergy to give cash to gov't." (PDI, 9/1/05) It reported that "Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla has called on the faithful, especially members of the religious community to embark on a collective sacrifice to help address the country's financial crisis." What an irony!

What about the diocesan community where thousands and thousands of pesos in contributions from the parishioners are poured in? It is only kept in the hands of, if not some, most of the parish priests. They don't even share it with the poor in their area. The contributions should be distributed to the different ministries like the ministry on worship, education and social services. But no, they keep it for themselves and indulge in luxury. You should see their flashy cars. Some even have more than one personal car.

On top of this, they pay their office staff below the minimum wage and without any benefits. And to think that they belong to the church and preach social justice. There are scandals involving priests having girlfriends and children but the root cause of these is money. If the priests do not have lots of money, they cannot afford to have secret families.

Since the funds come from parishioners, there ought to be a law mandating the audit of Church funds. However, this is not feasible because of the separation of Church and State. But the government should look into the human rights violations by the Church, particularly in the treatment of its staff.

It is evident that graft and corruption also abounds even in the Church, and I cringe when I read in the papers articles similar to the one cited above. It is really comical, but it has to stop and only media can do this. Media can start investigating and questioning priests and office staff in the dioceses. I believe that once this is out in the open, there will be changes in the Church for the better at last.

—LILLIAN A. BERONA,
Las Piñas City

LETTERS

Power rate could still be reduced

THE P0.23-PER-KWH REDUCTION in Meralco's September charge is a welcome relief for residential consumers who are reeling from the effects of the skyrocketing oil prices.

But did it have to be the President (instead of Meralco) who had to announce the cut, like she were Meralco's spokesperson? Or did she make the announcement just to earn the credit for Meralco's decision to buy more power from its IPPs (independent power producers), a move that Meralco claims will result in a reduction in its power rates?

After that controversial junking of the impeachment complaints, the motive behind her action is suspect. Couldn't her advisers do any better than demean the Office of the President?

And then again, this question about the current charges of the Meralco IPPs. Anybody can go to the National Power Corp.'s website which shows that although its generation charge since May 2005 has increased to P4.40 per kWh, the power rate we see in the Meralco monthly bill is P4.93 per kWh. A reduction of P0.23 per kWh, will bring down the average generation charge to P4.70 per kWh. This is still P0.30 per kWh higher than Napocor's current rate.

What this tells us is: If Meralco buys all its power needs from Napocor, consumers will get a reduction of P0.53 per kWh, not just P0.23 per kWh.

—TESSIE L. HILARIO,
4191 Ponte St.,
Barangay Tejeros, Makati City

The Chinese in the World War II campaign for liberation and freedom

I WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY THE article, "Asia marks end of war, but little fanfare in RP" by Margaux C. Ortiz. (PDI, 8/16/05) Indeed, practically nothing is known by the present-day generation of Filipinos regarding the contributions of World War II Manila Chinese to the cause of freedom.

As a young teener in late 1944, I witnessed these Chinese guerrillas occupy our village at the foot of Mt. Arayat. Their historic and heroic exploits preceded them not only in Pampanga but also in Bulacan, Tarlac, Bataan, Zambales, Nueva Ecija and the Southern Tagalog provinces. They were highly respected by the civilian population, peasant partisans and USAFFE guerrillas for their bravery, intellectualism, iron discipline and powerful firearms.

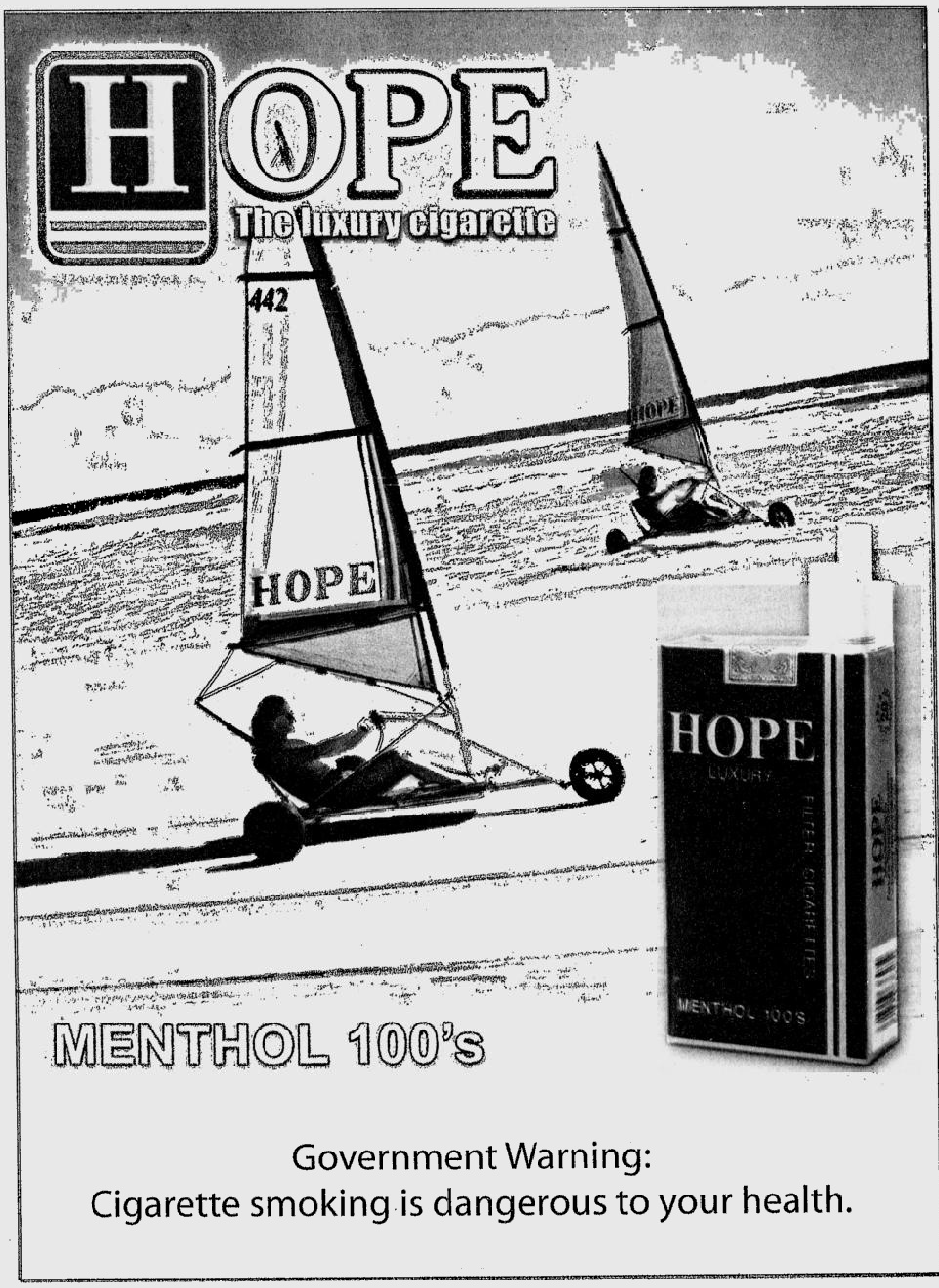
They were the very first foreign civilians to join the first Filipino peasant partisan groups in Candaba, Pampanga. On March 14, 1942, their encampment was attacked by a combined force of Japanese soldiers and Tagalog puppet policemen from San Miguel, Bulacan. The confident enemy troops realized too late they had fallen into a trap. After the battle, 40 Japanese soldiers and 68 Tagalog puppet policemen lay dead. One Chinese guerrilla named Li, single-handedly killed six of the enemies.

On March 29, 1942, various guerrilla bands in the Central Plain met in Sitio Bawit, Bo. San Lorenzo, Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, and formally organized the very first and largest guerrilla army in the Philippines. Supremo Luis M. Taruc wanted to call it the Philippine Army of Liberation but Manila Chinese persuaded the committee to name it the People's Anti-Japanese Army, hence: Hukbo ng Bayan Laban Sa Hapon (Hukbalahap).

On May 19, 1942, the Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Unit or Wah Chi, was officially formed to include all Chinese volunteers from outside Manila. They included intellectuals, firearms experts, military tacticians, guerrilla veterans from China, demolition experts, etc. From June 1942, the Wah Chi took a Pampango Huk squadron and for three months secretly scoured the mountains of Bataan and Zambales for discarded and stored firearms, ammunition and gun parts. These were then transported secretly in the dead of night to a hideout atop Pasbul Mountain in western Pampanga, where they were painstakingly cleaned, repaired and reassembled. These were then distributed to new Huk squadrons.

In the latter part of the war, the Wah Chi joined the Huks and USAFFE guerrillas in fighting the Japanese. They also acted successfully as peace mediators in the Huk and USAFFE rivalry. They liberated several towns in late 1944. In February 1945, Wah Chi units joined the US Army and other guerrilla groups in the fighting in Manila. They also participated in the liberation of more than 2,000 American war prisoners from the Los Baños Prison Camp.

—DANIEL H. DIZON,
War History Club of Angeles,
Villa Gloria, Angeles City



The US camouflage for intelligence ops

BAMBI L. HARPER NARRATED IN HER JULY 30 column the "traveling spree" (or what we call "*suroy-suroy*"—a Cebuano word for meandering or "*pasyal-pasyal*"—in one of our revitalized General Education subjects in UP Diliman) of two young US naval cadets, Leonard Sargent and W.B. Wilcox, in the Luzon provinces in 1898. Harper noted that "the two young travelers found the residents of Manila unpleasant (but warned not to prejudge the rest of the population)." The rural folks were described as "hospitable and kind-hearted" who treated the special guests to dinners and dances.

Apparently, Harper highlighted the superficial value of Filipino hospitality and concluded that "in many ways we haven't changed at all."

Of course, the story was just part of the account about the young cadets' tour of duty in the Philippines, which were dictated by an undeclared policy. In their case, Wilcox and Sargent's *suroy-suroy* concealed the real intent of their mission; they were, in fact, on covert intelligence operation which was hatched by Rear Admiral George Dewey and disguised as "ethnographic research" under the auspices of the racist anthropologist Dean Worcester. They were gathering vital information "...at a time when the United States had not yet made up its mind whether or not to hold on to the Philippines."

Wilcox and Sargent in their valuable "Report of Tour Through the Islands of Luzon, November 23, 1898" (Senate Document No. 196, 56th Congress, 1st Session, February 23,1900) took note of Luzon's geography from a tactical angle, noting the best approaches from which to attack cities and fortifications. They also attached a detailed map. Filipino officers under Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo suspected that this was the tour's ultimate goal. In the report's final section "Preparedness for War," the two cadets made an evaluation of Filipino troops' strength, war materials and defenses.

Maj. Gen. George Wheeler (also known as "Fighting Joe" and the "darling" of war correspondents in Cuba and the Philippines) of the US Army and the publishers of "Our Islands and Their People" (1899) may have agreed that such report "...will meet the hearty appreciation of every intelligent American who would acquaint himself with our Islands and their people." Unfortunately, the factual weight and hidden wealth of their intelligence report prepared and confirmed the fears of the Filipinos interviewed by the two young intelligence officers—the coming genocidal war of America against the Filipinos, which started on Feb. 4, 1899.

I hope Harper will take note in her future columns that the seeming *suroy-suroy* of the two American cadets was not a meaningless meandering but a conscious attempt to write Philippine history under the imperialist policy of the United States.

—FLORENTINO A. INIEGO JR.
College of Arts and Letters,
UP Diliman, Quezon City

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Nestlé union leader murdered

CALAMBA CITY—THE LEADER OF STRIKING WORKers of food and beverage giant Nestlé Philippines was gunned down in front of a plastic factory in Barangay Paciano Rizal this city late Thursday afternoon.

The death of Diosdado Fortuna, 50, was quickly condemned by leftist labor groups, with one pinning the blame on Ms Arroyo as the killing came after the President talked tough against her political opponents.

"We are certain that the killing is politically motivated. Arroyo's hands are bloodied once more ...," said a statement from Elmer Labog, national chair of the Kilusang Mayo Uno.

"We will seek justice for his death and will send the evil perpetrators of this murder to hell where they belong," he said.

Fortuna died of two gunshot wounds in the back as doctors tried to save his life at the Calamba Doctors' Hospital.

Fortuna heads the 660-strong Union of Filipino Employees-Drug and Food Alliance (UFE-DFA), the coalition of employees of the Nestlé factory in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The group has been on strike since Jan. 14, 2002 after talks for a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with management on retirement benefits bogged down.

Pedro Dy-Liacco Jr., director for communications of Nestlé, said in a statement that the Nestlé management was shocked over the killing of Fortuna.

"We condemn this act of violence and extend our sympathies to Fort's family and relatives. We are prepared to extend help to his family and the Calamba police for a swift resolution of its investigation."

"He doesn't deserve to die like this. He did nothing wrong but to fight for what is due the lowly workers like him. What an injustice," his wife Luz said.

Luz quickly blamed Nestlé management for the killing.

"My husband has no other enemy except Nestlé management."

Supt. Nestor de la Cueva, deputy chief of the Calamba police, said Fortuna was on his way home in his motorcycle from the Nestlé picket line when gunmen shot him twice about 5:20 p.m.

A passing motorist stopped by and brought Fortuna to the hospital where he died.

Police said the gunmen wore helmets and could not be easily identified.

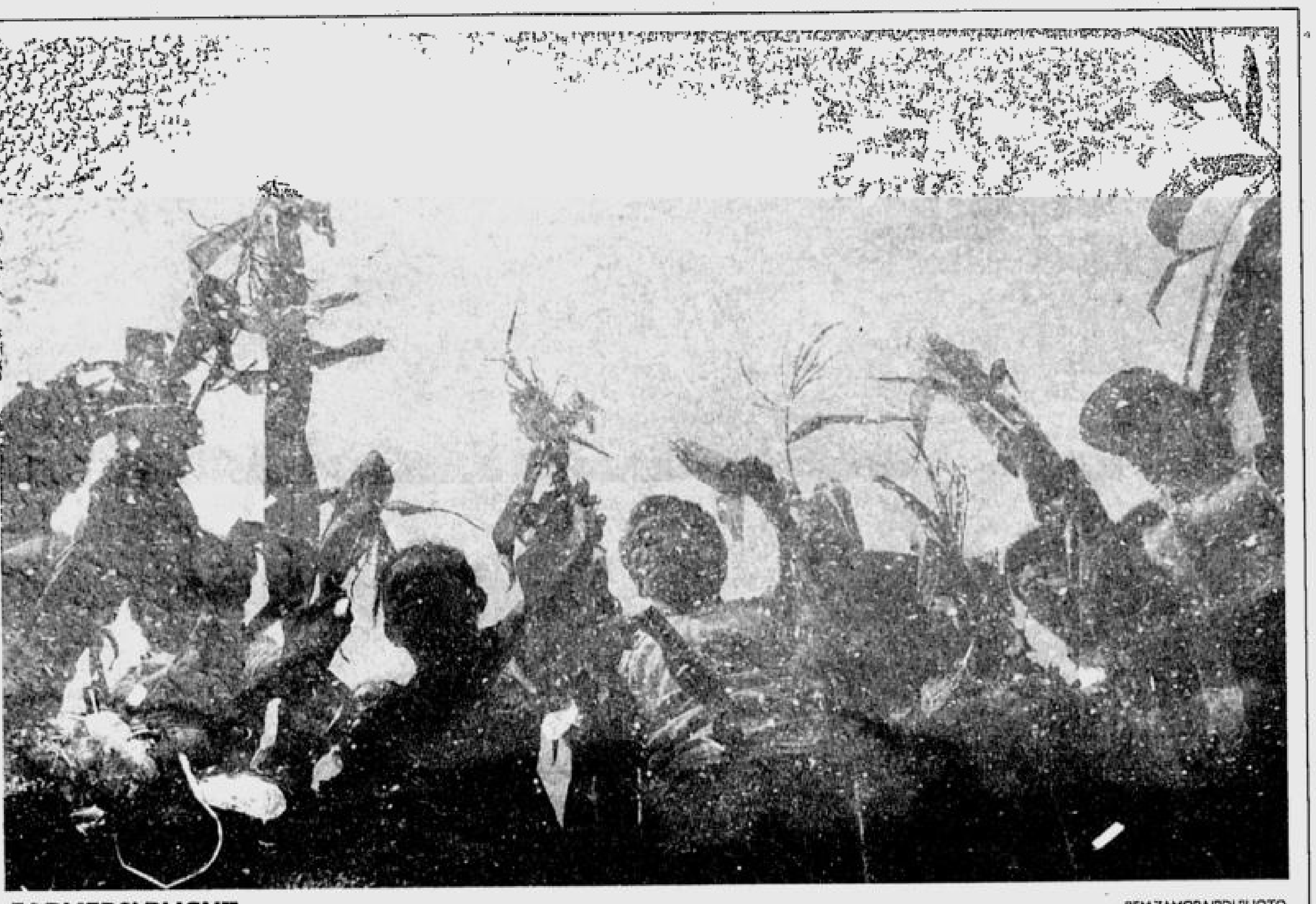
After news of his death spread, hundreds of people trooped to the Nestlé factory to denounce the killing.

Fortuna's wife said her husband's last text message to her, sent just 30 minutes before he was gunned down, was about their two-year-old grandson, who was suffering from diarrhea.

"He would tell me to remember the face of his would be assassin. To remember the vehicle his attackers will use," she said. "It hurts me more to know that I wasn't there when he was killed. How can I help him get justice?"

Fortuna became president of the Nestlé union when its former leader, Meliton Roxas, was killed in front of the Nestlé plant in 1988.

Marlon Ramos with Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



REM ZAMORA/PDI PHOTO

FARMERS' PLIGHT
Farmers from Calatagan, Batangas rally near the Supreme Court denouncing the SC decision favoring Danding Cojuangco's Asturas Chemical Industries, a company which plans to build a cement factory in Batangas at the expense of 312 farmer beneficiaries who has occupied the land for 30 years.

GMA to be absent in ARMM execs' inauguration

By Nash Maulana
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—THE NEW SET of officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will be sworn into office on Sept. 30, minus President Macapagal-Arroyo in the list of national officials expected as guests in the inaugural day.

But, according to the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), the President had a tentative schedule here anytime next week, which may be set in time for the first day in office of the newly elected officials.

The President earlier said she maintained a hands off policy on the affairs of the regional elections, consistent with her decision to allow the region to become a free zone for political parties to level the playing field for members of the K-4 Coalition, who contested each other during the elections.

They include candidates from the Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD), who were endorsed by Speaker Jose de Venecia, the Liberal Party with candidates backed by Senate President Franklin Drilon and the local Ompia Party, whose candidates and supporters were allied with Lakas-CMD Party members and with the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) under National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

The statutory three-year term for new officials commences 12:01 p.m. on Sept. 30, during which, outgoing officials led by incumbent Gov. Parouk Hussin will turn over offices, functions, assets and liabilities to their successors—principally, governor-elect Zaldy Uy Ampatuan and vice governor-elect Ansaruddin Adiong.

Members of an ARMM bilateral transition team said a Malacañang advisory indicated that the President might be represented in the occasion by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who would also preside over the oath-taking ceremonies.

They said they have invited all ARMM officials, including those who ran and lost in the last elections, as well as their supporters.

But Adiong is not likely to receive his office from outgoing Vice Gov. Mahid Mutilan, who went abroad on Sept. 5 and has not returned since.

NPA guerrillas attack sugarcane plantation, kill 4

By Grace Albasin
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MALAYBALAY CITY—COMMUNIST rebels killed at least four people and wounded two others during an ambush inside a sugarcane plantation in nearby Quezon, Bukidnon, reports reaching the provincial police office here said.

The National Democratic Front (NDF) yesterday immediately declared that the raid by the New People's Army (NPA) on the Ozamiz Agricultural Development Inc. (OADI) in Barangay San Jose on Tuesday afternoon was a punishment for its owner because of alleged land grabbing activities.

The police said about 20 NPA rebels opened fire on a vehicle carrying several security guards of the plantation as they were on their way to the OADI office.

The slain guards were identified as Eladio Decir, Felix Labanan, Louie Labrado and Jonard Salilig. Injured were Ricky Tandoc and Leo Reyes.

The guards were all employees of the Tagbayani Security Agency, which provides security for the farm.

Before fleeing, the rebels also took three 12-gauge shotguns and an M-16 Armalite rifle from the victims.

Cesar Renerio, NDF-Northcentral Mindanao spokesperson, said the raid was conducted after *lumad* repeatedly complained about the "land grabbing activities" of the farm's owner.

The family of a key city in Mindanao owns OADI.

"The *lumad* sought our help because they could no longer take (the owner's) greed," Renerio said.

ROUNDUP

Tricycle strike

PAGADIAN CITY—Tricycle drivers here declared a transport strike on Sept. 22 to demand a P2-fare hike, saying they needed the increase due to rising costs of gasoline and other petroleum products. Drivers parked their tricycles, the main mode of transportation around the city, along major streets calling non-association members to join the strike, which began at 6 a.m. Thursday. Boy Ang, president of the tricycle association, said 100 percent of association members, or around 2,500, joined the strike. Ang said they would continue their protest until the local government unit granted their demand.

Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Reb suspect nabbed

BALANGA CITY—Police arrested on Sept. 13 a suspected member of the communist group Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan who was implicated in the killing of two policemen in Bataan. Provincial police director Senior Supt. Hernando Zafra said the suspect, Raul Llagas, 39, alias "Carla," of Samal town, was arrested after the bus he was riding in was stopped at a checkpoint in Dinalupihan town. Zafra said Judge Remigio Escalada Jr. of the Bataan regional trial court issued a warrant for Llagas' arrest. Llagas was suspected of killing Chief Insp. Guillermo Tolentino in 2000 and SPO3 Amador Valiente in 1997. Police said Llagas also joined communist rebels in raiding police stations and Army detachments in Pilar, Morong, Orani and Samal. *Greg Refraccion and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Cable TV provider raided

COTABATO CITY—Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation raided a cable TV provider here and seized decoders, which they said were illegally acquired. The agents, three of them armed with handguns, barged into the Maguindanao Skycable in Rosary Heights and ordered company employees not to move while three other agents searched the offices and the studio. After confiscating the decoders, the agents left. NBI regional director Silvino Cinches told the INQUIRER that the raid on the establishment was not coordinated with his office.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Isabela bridge opened

BURGOS, Isabela—Eighteen years after its construction started, a bridge connecting the towns of Burgos and Quirino was opened recently. Officials said the 100.64-meter bridge, whose construction started in 1988, was completed only this year due to insufficiency of funds. Burgos Mayor Felixnaldo Alabon said the bridge and the newly built P1.88-million road linking the villages of Caligulan and San Miguel would help farmers in his town transport their produce.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Apology

THE PDI Mindanao Bureau wishes to apologize for the story "BI asked to monitor Indons in Sarangani," which came out on page A16 of the Sept. 20 issue of the INQUIRER. The story was in an old filename. The old story was not overwritten when the correct story, which was about the Optical Media Board's action on businesses using unlicensed software, was pasted and saved using the same filename.

Judge junks case vs suspected brains in Esperat murder

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A JUDGE in Tacurong City dismissed the murder charges against the alleged masterminds in the death of journalist Marlene Esperat.

Judge Francis Palmones, of the Regional Trial Court Branch 20, came out with the decision, dismissing the murder charges against Osmeña Montañer and Estrella Sabay of the Department of Agriculture in Central Mindanao, for lack of evidence on Aug. 31 yet.

But lawyer Nena Santos, counsel for the Esperat family, told the INQUIRER she was given a copy only two weeks after the order was issued.

The three suspects, who implicated the two ranking agriculture officials, also raised a howl over the dismissal of the charges.

They urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the case.

Suspects Gerry Cabayag, the alleged triggerman, Estanislao Bismanos and Randy Grecia, issued the appeal Thursday.

"We are asking you Madam President Arroyo to look into how our case will be solved. I am the one who shot Esperat. The reason why I confessed my involvement was because there were masterminds who gave us orders," Cabayag said.

"What will happen to us now? I surrendered so there will be justice but now the case (against the supposed masterminds) was already dismissed," Bismanos said.

Esperat, 49, was shot in front of her children on March 24 at home in Barangay New Isabela in Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat.

On April 9, lawmen arrested the three suspects with former Army sergeant Rowie Barua in Davao del Norte.

In his extrajudicial confession, Barua admitted that Montañer and Sabay asked him to hire killers to murder Esperat.

Cabayag said they were paid to kill Esperat and the one who gave orders were Montañer, regional finance officer and Sabay, regional accountant.

With the dismissal of the case against the suspected masterminds, Cabayag said he was apprehensive of their safety now.

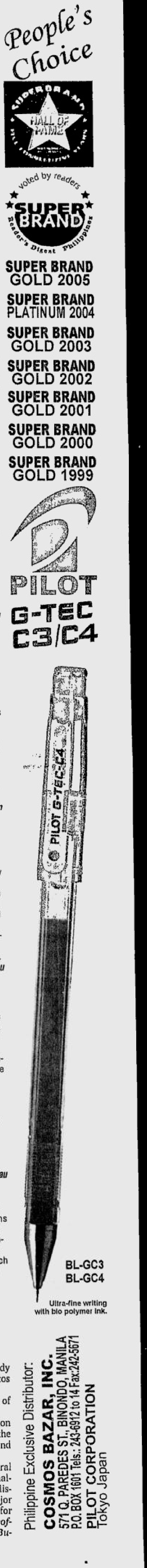
Barua, who allegedly hired the three suspects, is under the government's witness protection program.

"The three suspects already pleaded guilty to the crime," Santos asked.

She blamed the Department of Justice.

Santos said she will file a motion contesting the dismissal of the charges against Montañer and Sabay.

Carlos Conde, secretary general of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines, said the dismissal of the charges was a major setback in the quest for justice for Esperat. *Aquiles Zonio and Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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US pols, vets at odds over Balangiga bells

By Rolando O. Borrinaga
Balangiga, Eastern Samar

WHICH OCCUR FIRST: the return of Balangiga bells or the ritual reconciliation among descendants of the combatants from both sides of the Battle of Balangiga in 1901?

This chicken-or-egg question bugs the healing and closure process for the descendants of those involved in the Balangiga Encounter, which 104th anniversary would be commemorated in this Eastern Samar town on Sept. 28.

There were high hopes early this year that the two bells of Balangiga at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (AFB) in Wyoming would soon be on their way home to the Philippines. But the Wyoming governor has since scuttled these hopes.

Last March 26, the Wyoming Veterans Commission (WVC), by a 7-4 vote in favor, decided to support a resolution to return the two bells in their territory to the Philippines.

The vote was a result of months of behind-the-scene efforts by the Balangiga Research Group (BRG) to influence the decision by providing the commission with the latest findings from their research that had clarified and resolved the contrasting American and Filipino versions of the Balangiga Incident on Sept. 28, 1901.

The BRG is composed of Jean Wall, the daughter of the first American soldier to be attacked in Balangiga; Bob Couttie, a Subic-based British screenwriter and video director; and this writer.

The BRG's research findings have also been acknowledged and used by Eastern Samar Bishop Leonardo Medroso and other US-based supporters in their complementary campaign for the return of the bells to the country.

Just before the WVC voting, Jean Wall presented her case for the return of the bells, based on two arguments that were not contested by any WVC member: that none of the two bells in Wyoming was rung during the attack on Company C, 9th US Infantry Regiment (by Filipino guerrilla fighters); the involved bell is in the museum of the 2nd US Infantry Division stationed in Korea; and that there is no connection between Wyoming and Company C; no member of the ill-fated company came from Wyoming.

After the vote, the next step would have been for the WVC representatives and Wall to call on Wyoming Gov. David Freudenthal and brief him on the decision, and then they would release a joint press statement on the issue.

But a disgruntled member of the WVC broke agreed rules and persuaded Gov. Freudenthal to oppose the return of the bells. The governor did so with a press release, even before he was formally briefed and given the opportunity to examine the evidence supporting the commission's decision.

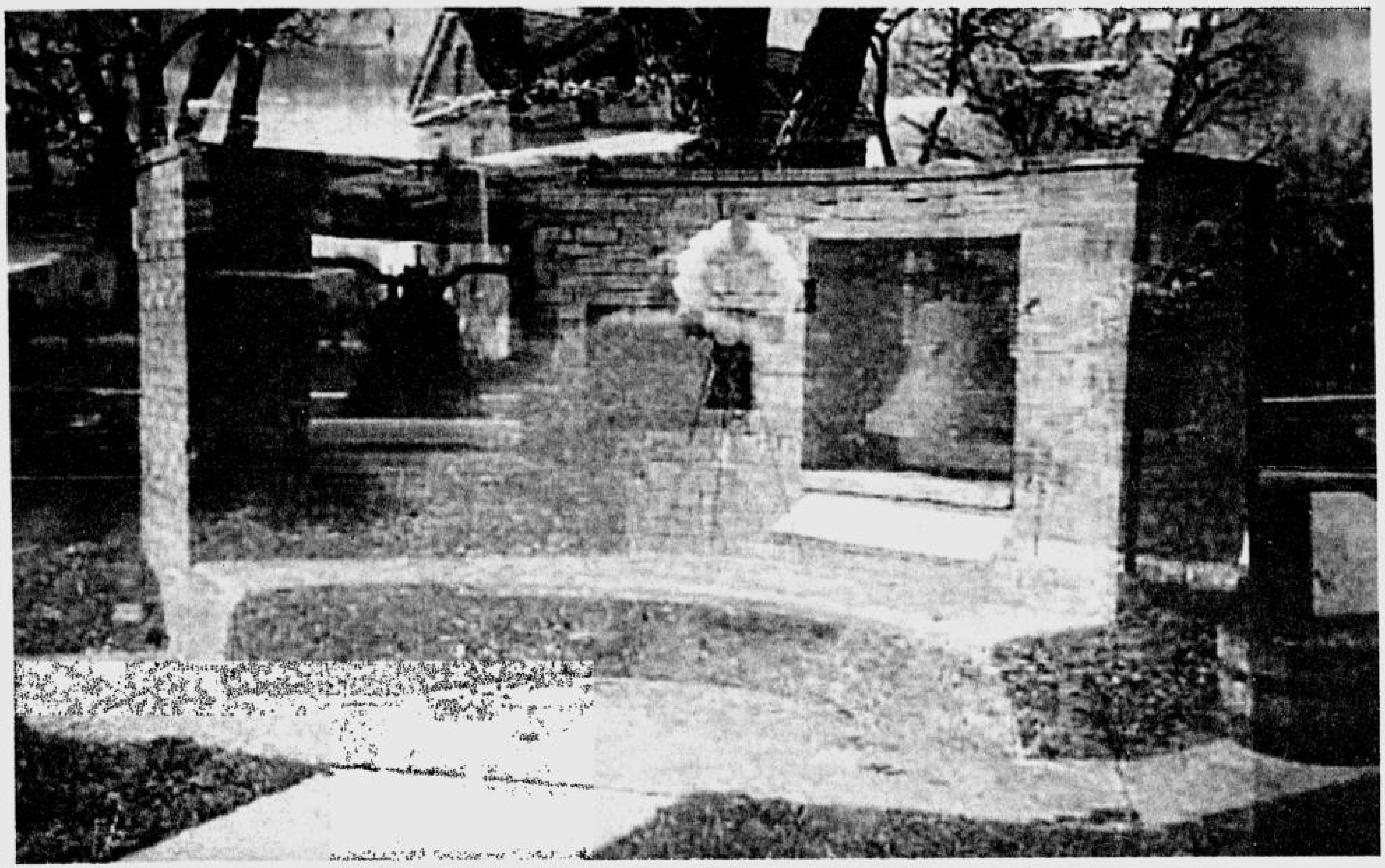

PHOTO OF Balangiga Bells Memorial in Wyoming, mysteriously overlaid with items from Pvt. Adolph Gamlin's grave in Nebraska.

2001 PHOTO COURTESY OF JEAN WALL

Damage control

Away from the media, Balangiga Mayor Catalina Camenforte, through the BRG, sent an e-mail to Gov. Freudenthal expressing her people's "appreciation to the Wyoming Veterans Commission for its decision to recommend the return of the two bells."

The response was made by a political analyst of the Wyoming governor. It stated:

"The governor believes the two Bells of Balangiga ... represent a significant part of Wyoming's military heritage ... and he respectfully believes they should stay where they are now located. [But] the fate of these bells, situated on a federal facility, has been for many years and is at the discretion of the federal government and the ultimate decision to return the Bells of Balangiga or leave them as they are at F.E. Warren AFB is one over which Governor Freudenthal has no authority. A decision to return the bells to the Philippines would come from the United States Congress."

Regarding the legalities, experts around the world that the BRG had consulted were one in saying that based on custom law, military law and international treaties, the contested bells belong to Balangiga.

All US officials directly involved in the Balangiga issue on both sides of the Pacific, including US Army senior leaders and diplomats, have also been one in saying, although quietly, that their government knows that the right, legal and ethical course of action is to return the bells to their rightful place, that is, in Balangiga.

On top of these, the US Congress, through the Unified Code of Military Justice, has provided the US president with the required authority to return the bells regardless of the status of the property rights involved.

The Wyoming front

The Balangiga bells issue exploded into a mud-slinging contest involving the sense of honor, integrity, reputations and affiliations of key veteran leaders in Wyoming.

Three WVC members who were known to have voted in favor of returning the bells were not reappointed to the commission last July. They were alleged victims of "bullying" inside the WVC, which was exposed by Patty Burgin, a worker on the commission, in a letter published by the Casper Star Tribune last Aug. 10.

The foremost "bullying" victim so far is Col. Joe Sestak, who raised the approved motion to return the two original bells in Wyoming to Balangiga. He is now out of the WVC.

Sestak, as Wyoming department commander of the American Legion, was the "point man" for keeping the bells in US soil during President Fidel Ramos' failed campaign in 1997-98 to have the bells returned to the country in time for the centennial of the Declaration of the Philippine Independence on June 12, 1898.

This time around, backed by recent research findings and new information, Sestak has had a change of heart and now wants the bells returned.

"Returning the bells is the right thing to do in light of the present international climate and the fact that many nations are now returning artifacts or booty to the nations from which they came," Sestak said in a letter published by the Casper Star Tribune last April 8.

In 1998, 46 of 60 members of the House of Representatives and 18 of 30 senators in the Wyoming State Legislature signed an informal joint resolution endorsing a plan to replicate the two war trophies on display at the F.E. Warren AFB so both Balangiga and Wyoming could have one authentic and one replica bell each.

But the resolution failed to prosper due to the opposition from the veterans, who felt they were "shut out of the process."

It was the Wyoming veterans' voice that was heard in the US Congress, where Senators Craig Thomas and Michael B. Enzi and Rep. Barbara Cubin filed bills opposing any move to dismantle the bells.

This time, the same Wyoming Congressional delegation and the state governor are exerting pressure on the critical mass of veterans who already favor the return of the bells to abide by their old position to keep the bells in their state.

Reconciliation efforts

Apart from the bells campaign, officials and key residents of Balangiga have spearheaded the process of healing and reconciliation between the descendants of Balangiga and of Company C, 9th US Infantry Regiment.

Jean Wall started the process for the American survivors' descendants in 1998 and 2001. She has since reconciled with the descendants of Capitan Valeriano Abanador and Mariano Valdenor, two Balangiga fighters who had actually fought her father, Pvt. Adolph Gamlin, in 1901.

In March 2003, Mayor Camenforte wrote a letter to Col. Daniel P. Bolger, Chief of Staff of the Korea-based 2nd US Infantry Division, the mother unit of the 9th US Infantry Regiment. She invited their town's former enemy unit to conduct a sentimental visit to Balangiga on Aug. 10 and 11 of that year. (Aug. 10 is the town fiesta, and Aug. 11 is the date of arrival of Company C in Balangiga in 1901.)

Camenforte has since received a response from Captain Parik, commander of Company C. The captain's letter expressed friendship and the need for a "long overdue reconciliation" for the 1901 event.

But though the Balangiga mayor's invitation had been accepted, Company C's sentimental visit may not be forthcoming soon.

Last year, the 9th US Infantry Regiment, including Company C, was dispatched to Iraq to fight a war that has parallels with the bloody Samar battlefield a century ago.

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Luisita to fight gov't over stock contract cancellation

From page A1

adopted by the family of former President Corazon Aquino and its tenants in 1989 and distribute the nearly 5,000-hectare hacienda to farm workers.

Luisita spokesperson Vigor Mendoza Jr. said there was no basis for the DAR to cancel the memorandum of agreement implementing the SDO in Hacienda Luisita because the HLI had complied with all the requirements of the contract.

"There's no reason to revoke it, and it's not for the DAR to do it now. If the DAR is thinking of revoking the SDO agreement, this may be viewed as violation of Constitution," Mendoza told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

"We will question their authority, and we will question the liabilities of the persons who did it. There are certain things the DAR can decide on, but whether a contract is not valid is for the court to say," he said.

The Luisita management and its legal consultants met yesterday afternoon following reports that the DAR would announce its decision on the Luisita farmers' petition to revoke the SDO early next week.

Agrarian issue

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser C. Pangandaman had said that the DAR had jurisdiction over the Luisita case. He said the farmers' petition was an "agrarian issue" that should be addressed by the DAR.

Mendoza, however, maintained that the DAR would violate Section 10 Article 3 of the Constitution, which provides against the non-impairment of obligation of contract, if it moves to cancel the SDO agreement.

"If a contract is valid and existing, and duly complied with, and DAR comes up with a policy that revokes this, then that is an impairment of this obligation," he said.

He said the HLI has "all the proof" that it has complied with all the requirements of the contract, including the distribution of the HLI shares and three-percent production share, the awarding of home lots.

118-M shares distributed

In a letter to DAR dated June 9, the HLI reported that it had distributed 118 million shares to 11,955 farm workers as of April. The original farmer beneficiaries numbered around 6,000, HLI said.

The 118 million shares represented the total shares of farm worker beneficiaries in the HLI, representing 33.26 percent of the HLI stocks, which the agreement stipulated should be distributed within 30 years or by 2019.

"We decided to go ahead with the distribution of the shares because there are people making an issue out of it, so to settle everything, we advanced the distribution. We hoped it would be an act of good faith to show that we intend to comply with everything," Mendoza said.

He criticized farmers who claimed during the focus group discussions held by the DAR that they signed the agreement without understanding the terms and benefits, and who did not know now how to use their stock certificates.

Why only now?

Mendoza said it was not even the management of the HLI but non-government organizations and DAR officials who explained the SDO to farmers during the two referenda in May and October 1989, when 96 percent of farmers voted to approve the SDO agreement.

"Even in law, those who sit on their right have no right to speak of ... If they didn't understand it, they should have said something earlier, not after 16, 17 years," he said.

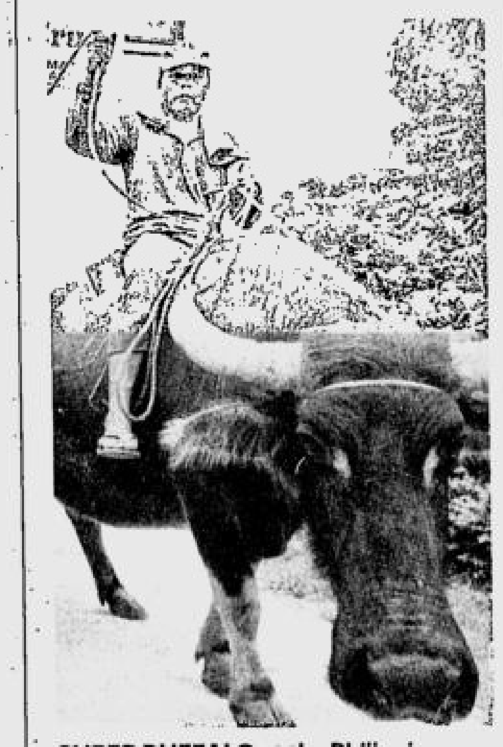
The farmers asked the DAR to nullify the SDO and distribute the lands to farmers in a petition submitted in October 2003 and reinforced by another petition in December of the same year.

The DAR created task force Luisita to investigate the farmers' allegations of SDO agreement violations only late last year in the wake of a violent dispersal in Luisita that killed seven people and hurt scores of workers on strike.

Why so fast?

"You can't railroad this. The process in which this (SDO agreement) was approved took more than a year. This (resolution) can't be done arbitrarily, whimsically and expeditiously," Mendoza said.

"They did this in how many months? Did they even call a vote among farmers to see who wanted land distribution? Did they validate the votes? Was it done without coercion? We're asking the same questions now ... because we had a referendum, and we went through the whole process," he said.



SUPER BUFFALO at the Philippine Carabao Center: Headed for cloning. REUTERS

Coming soon from carabao laboratory: Guyito clone

From page A1

The carabao, of which there are an estimated 3.2 million in the Philippines, is a national symbol because of its role in everything from pulling carts to producing meat and milk.

But dairy carabao produce only a relatively small amount of milk, an average of 8 liters a day, according to Dr. Libertado Cruz, executive director of the government-run Philippine Carabao Center.

The aim is to replicate a "super buffalo" that would boost the genetic makeup and milk production of the native water buffalo, the carabao, said Cruz.

"We are now in the process of transferring the cloned embryos to a surrogate dam (mother)," he said yesterday.

Thanks to Dolly

"By the middle of next year we can expect some live animals."

The Philippines is not usually known for technological innovation, but Cruz said cloning had become easier and less expensive since Dolly the sheep, the first cloned mammal, entered the world in 1997.

Brazil has created clones of cattle, including an endangered cow species earlier this year.

Cruz said researchers at the center had created the embryos by fusing genetic material from somatic cells taken from a Bulgarian water buffalo's ear with the eggs of local carabao.

The Philippines has imported about 3,500 Bulgarian buffalo, which are descendents of a high-yielding Murrah breed from India, Cruz said.

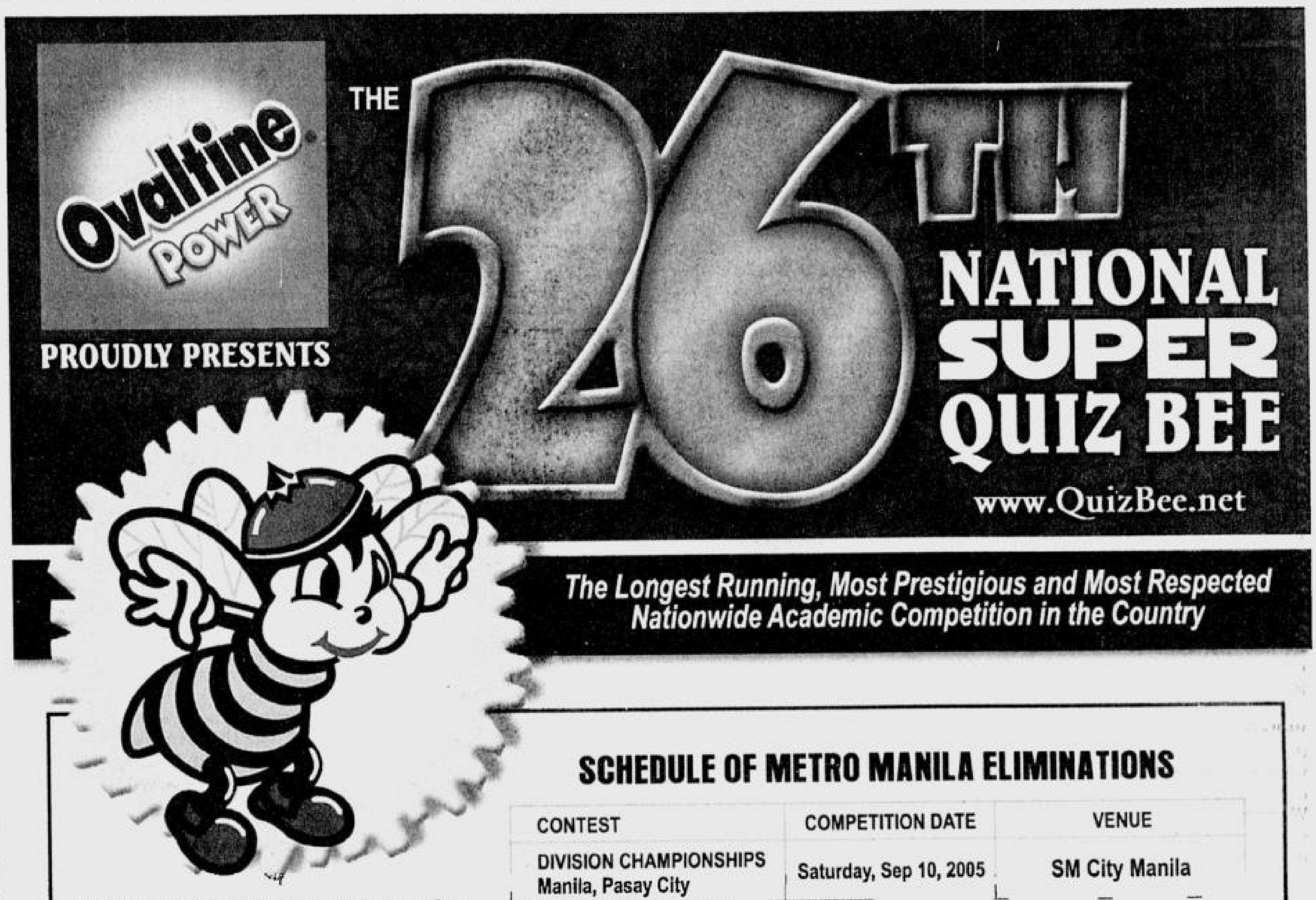
Higher-yielding

"In India, where the animal numbers around 98 million, I have seen some animals producing 35 liters per day," he said. "I would consider these animals as the super buffalo, but they are not so many."

Cruz said the plan was to obtain enough sperm from cloned male super buffalo to start a widespread insemination program in the Philippines that would create higher-yielding carabao.

He said there was no danger of the Philippine carabao being entirely replaced by a new breed of super buffalo because there were genetically pure pools of carabao that would be protected.

"In terms of the future worries of these animals getting extinct, it's not going to happen," Cruz said. *Reuters*



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Quezon City, Makati City	Saturday, Sep 24, 2005	Ali Mall
Caloocan City, Valenzuela Malabon, Navotas	Saturday, Oct 8, 2005	Robinsons Place, Pioneer
Muntinlupa, Taguig, Pateros Paranaque, Las Pinas	Saturday, Oct 15, 2005	SM Southmall
Pasig, Marikina, San Juan Mandaluyong	Saturday, Oct 22, 2005	Robinsons Galleria
METRO MANILA REGIONAL FINALS	Saturday, Nov 12, 2005	SM City San Lazaro

Competition Levels & Subject Categories

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Elementary Level
Grades 4 -7
10-13 years old

Level II Nat'l Junior Quiz Bee
Secondary Level
1st - 4th Yr High School
14-17 years old

Level III Nat'l Senior Quiz Bee
Tertiary Level
1st - 5th Yr College
18-22 years old

- *Makabayan (Philippine History, Culture and Values)*
- *Mathematics*
- *Science & Technology*
- *General Information & International Affairs*

National Eliminations

School Eliminations Aug 1-31, 2005
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OUT OF GAS. So many people had been stuck for so long in traffic-clogged highway that fuel shortages were not uncommon. Texas Army National Guard trucks went around to provide motorists with gasoline. AP/THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE

One of biggest exodus ever empties ...

From page A1

came ashore Aug. 29 as a Category 4.

The unprecedented flight from the flood-prone Houston, the nation's fourth largest city with a population of more than 2 million, left clogged highways at a near standstill, frustrating hundreds of thousands of people whose cars and tempers were overheating.

The storm claimed its first victim before it even hit land when an elderly woman died of apparent heat exhaustion while stuck in a massive traffic jam of Texas evacuees.

A bus carrying elderly evacuees caught fire and was rocked by explosions early Friday on a gridlocked highway near Dallas, killing as many as 24 people, authorities said.

The bus, with about 45 people on board, had been traveling since Thursday. The passengers were from a nursing home in Bellaire, an upscale enclave within Houston.

Some vehicles that had run out of gas were left stranded on the highway.

Bumber-to-bumper

"It can't get much worse, 100 yards an hour," steamed Willie Bayer, 70, who was heading out of Houston and trying to get to Sulphur Springs in far northeast Texas. "It's frustrating bumper-to-bumper."

State officials scrambled to reroute several inbound highways to accommodate outbound traffic, but many people were waiting so long they ran out of gas and were forced to park.

"We know you're out there," Houston Mayor Bill White said of the congestion that extended well into Louisiana. "We understand there's been fuel shortages."

Texas Army National Guard trucks were escorted by police to directly provide motorists with gasoline. The state was also working to get more than 760,000 liters of gas to fuel-starved stations in the Houston area.

Massive evacuation

By late Thursday night, the traffic was at least moving slowly, but was still backed up for about 160 kilometers in what White called "one of the largest mass evacuations in American history."

Scores of hospitals along the evacuation routes out of Houston early Friday closed their doors to new patients after they were swamped with heat exhaustion victims after temperatures reached 37 degrees Celsius.

Regional shelters were already full, and many people slept in the cars outside overbooked hotels.

Unpredictable

Forecasters said it appeared Houston and Galveston could avoid a direct hit as Rita veered slightly to the east, threatening with its winds the Beaumont and Port Arthur area about 120 km east of Houston.

Officials warned Rita remained unpredictable. "I don't think anyone in the Gulf Coast is out of harm's way," David Paulison, acting director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said.

The first rain bands were expected before nightfall Friday (today in Manila) with the full fury of Rita expected into Saturday (Sunday here). Forecasters warned of the possibility of a storm surge of 4.5 to 6 meters, battering waves and rain of up to 38 centimeters (15 inches) along the Texas and western Louisiana coast.

Also New Orleans

At 5 a.m. EDT (5 p.m. Friday here), Rita was centered about 465 km southeast of Galveston and was moving to the west-northwest at near 14.5 kph. Its winds were 225 kph, down from 280 kph earlier in the day.

Hurricane warnings were in effect from Port O'Connor, Texas, to Morgan City, Louisiana, and the National Hurricane Center forecast the storm would make landfall as a "dangerous hurricane of at least Category 3 intensity."

Tropical storm warnings also were in effect east and north to include New Orleans, still crippled by Hurricane Katrina. Rita's steady rains Thursday were the first since Katrina and the forecast was for 7.5 to 12.5 cm (3 to 5 inches) in the coming days—dangerously close to the amount engineers said could send floodwaters pouring back into recently dry neighborhoods.

Prepared for worst

"Hurricane Rita is a very dangerous storm," said New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin. "We're not letting our guards down."

President George W. Bush, yet to shake off criticism of his leadership during the Katrina crisis, warned that officials "at every level of government are preparing for the worst." Bush planned to visit Texas on Friday to view the emergency preparations.

Many who were trying to leave said they were taking heed from Katrina, which smashed into the Louisiana and Mississippi coastal areas on Aug 29. Its force broke levees in New Orleans, flooding the city where thousands had been unable or unwilling to flee.

Katrina killed at least 1,066 people and displaced as many as 1 million.

At Houston's Johnson Space Center, Nasa evacuated its staff, powered down the computers at Mission Control and turned the international space station over to the Russian space agency.

In southwestern Louisiana, up to 500,000 residents along the state's southwest coast were urged to evacuate and state officials planned to send in buses to take refugees. *AP, Reuters and AFP*

13 oil refineries closed

THE TEXAS AND LOUISIANA COAST is home to the nation's biggest concentration of oil refineries. Environmentalists warned of the possibility of a toxic spill from the 87 chemical plants and petroleum installations that represent more than one-fourth of US refining capacity.

As Rita threatened the region's oil industry, Exxon Mobil said it was closing its Baytown, Texas, facility, the largest US oil refinery, and one in Beaumont, 144 km east.

The offshore Gulf region produces a third of US oil. The closings raised to at least 13 the number of US refineries out of commission from Katrina and Rita, which have shut 29 percent of US refining capacity and raised the specter of serious gasoline shortages in the days ahead.

Jarques back, hit raw deal in US

From page A1

general in Los Angeles, Marciano Paynor, said the couple was denied entry to the United States because of Jarque's inclusion on Washington's terrorist watchlist for his links to the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is representing the communist rebels in talks to end a 36-year insurgency.

US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop denied Jarque was arrested, but said privacy rules prevented him from giving more details on the former general's entry into the United States.

Jarque said he and his wife were detained for about 24 hours in separate cells before they boarded a plane back to Manila.

New Patriot Act

He said US immigration officials could not specify any charges against him, except that the refusal of entry into US soil was based on a "new Patriot Act."

"[According to the Act], I was in the US as a representative of a foreign terrorist organization," said Jarque.

Jarque said that at the Euless City Jail, where he and his wife were detained overnight, the authorities confiscated everything from him and his wife and left them wearing only their "briefs and panties."

They were also unable to have a decent meal during their 10-hour detention.

Raymundo Jr. said his sister, Melissa, a Texas resident, tried to bring food to their parents but was not allowed to do so by prison officials.

"They only had a cupcake for breakfast," Raymundo Jr. said.

Jarque said that he had no inkling at all that he and his wife would be denied entry because he had a valid 10-year tourist visa issued by the US Embassy in Manila in 1999. Xenia's US tourist visa was to expire next year.

Raymundo Jr. said his parents had last visited the United States in August 2004.

Wrong info

Jarque reiterated that they went to the United States for the birthday celebration of their daughter Melissa, the baptism of Melissa's 6-month-old son, to visit relatives, and to "alleviate" the pain of the recent death of their son, Rene.

Raymundo Jr. said his father saw documents indicating that US Homeland Security agents were operating in the Philippines, "but the problem is they are getting wrong information," he said, citing a report that identified the former general as a member of a terrorist organization.

"He is not even a member of the NDF," the younger Jarque said.

Jarque headed the Army's 3rd Infantry Division in Negros island in 1991-1992, and was credited with turning the tide against the communist New People's Army guerrillas who had broad support among the rural poor.

In 1995, he surprised the public when he announced he decided "to go underground to wage revolution," adding he had "come to understand and acknowledge the justness of the struggle ... by my erstwhile foes."

NDF consultant

In 1996, Jarque served as a consultant for the NDF panel in the peace talks but became less active after the government and rebels signed an agreement on human rights in 1998. In 2001, he became a security consultant for the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp.

In a statement, chief rebel negotiator Luis Jalandoni denounced the US action, saying Jarque was never a member of the NDF although he served as "politico-military consultant" for the rebels.

"The US is condemnable for arbitrarily labeling General Jarque as a 'terrorist,' and subsequently acting inhumanely against him and his wife who needs a kidney transplant," Jalandoni said.

"Neither one of them has ever been accused of committing any crime against the US or any of its citizens in the US or anywhere else in the world," he said.

Jarque urged President Macapagal-Arroyo and the US Embassy in Manila to look into the incident because Filipinos were being "falsely accused" of being terrorists and "stripped of their dignity by the shabby treatment of arrogant American immigration officials."

The 'same spies'

"They are falsely accusing Filipinos here. Because they know that we are poor, they know we cannot do anything about it in America. But as long as we are united, these Americans, their days are numbered," Jarque said in a mixture of English and Filipino.

"These are the same spies who intervene in Philippine politics and gather erroneous information fed to the United States," he said in a phone interview.

"We should denounce this kind of intervention and take stricter measures against Americans entering the country too," he said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday said US authorities might have information in deciding to deport Jarque.

"I know General Jarque as we both served in Cotabato before and I know he is no terrorist but we could not criticize the Americans on the basis they used in deporting him because they have their own information," Ermita told dzEC radio.

"Probably we should be more careful and may this be a lesson for all of us," he said.

The Jarques also expressed dismay at the Philippine consular officials in the United States who failed to help them.

"But if you're just an ordinary citizen, they won't mind you," Jarque said in Filipino.

No help from DFA

He denounced a consular official named Jocelyn Garcia for her "lack of sympathy" when his daughter Melissa called her.

"We were hoping they would be sympathetic at least or possibly assist or help my dad like what they're doing now with Michael Ray Aquino, but no one tried to give any help at all," said Raymundo Jr.

He said his sister tried to speak to Paynor in LA, but he "was not available."

"My parents received no help from the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs). My sister tried to contact them but they said they could not do anything at all. It was my sister who did everything to bring them back home safely," Raymundo Jr. said.

Jalandoni also condemned the Philippine government "for failing to provide timely assistance to Jarque and his wife, despite the fact that the former military general is the security consultant of a government corporation."

Banned from US

Raymundo Jr. said his sister was informed by a US immigration officer that a new memorandum from Washington was issued last Sept. 6 "instructing all immigration (officers), police department authorities to declare the CPP-NPA linked persons inadmissible to the US."

"The term 'linked' is too broad, based on what the lawyer I talked to said. It includes me, the spouses, cousins," Raymundo Jr. said.

He said that his parents are contemplating filing charges against US immigration authorities.

"They will file a case but I don't know to what extent," Raymundo Jr. said.

The National Bureau of Investigation said Jarque was brought to the bureau's Naia office for identification procedures.

But NBI spokesperson Auralyn Pascual said that Jarque was immediately released after it was verified that he had no standing warrants of arrest.

"There were warrants issued against him in the past, but all of these had been recalled so there was no legal basis to hold him," Pascual said. *With reports from Margaux Ortiz and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau, and AP*

Gonzales case goes to Supreme Court

From page A1

and public safety because Gonzales ... will not be able to perform his work," Tolentino said.

Malacañang yesterday sent a letter to the Senate blue ribbon committee chaired by Sen. Joker Arroyo formally asking it to reconsider its decision.

"We're requesting [that] Secretary Gonzales be given consideration..." Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters at an informal meeting of members of the consultative commission in Malacañang.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had earlier invoked the principle of separation of powers and urged the Senate to reconsider its decision and immediately order Gonzales' release from the chamber's custody.

But the senators have virtually put themselves on a collision course with Malacañang.

"He (Gonzales) remains in the custody of the Senate until he answers the questions. If he talks, he will be released," Arroyo said in an interview earlier yesterday.

Arroyo insisted that the 17-member committee's decision last Wednesday that Gonzales be cited for contempt and detained would stay until he manifests willingness to answer questions on the government's contract with the US law firm Venable LLP at another hearing.

Under the contract, which has drawn widespread criticism, Venable is to seek US grants for Philippine projects including rewriting the Constitution.

"That [request for Gonzales' release] is unacceptable," Arroyo said.

But he said the Senate would accord Gonzales the "regard and deference befitting his rank and stature while under detention."

The senators cited Gonzales for contempt and ordered him detained after he sidestepped simple questions about the Venable contract throughout the three-hour committee hearing on Wednesday.

Verbal abuse

He is confined at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City for treatment of hypertension under the custody of the Office of the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms.

According to Tolentino, the Senate blue ribbon committee "abused" its right because the Constitution also provides that "the rights of persons appearing in or affected by [Senate or House] inquiries shall be respected."

She pointed out that transcripts of the hearing would show that Gonzales was "the subject of verbal abuse, having been called a man with a flawed character and even ... a pimp."

"Contempt powers of the Senate, being drastic and extraordinary, should not be resorted to unless necessary," Tolentino said.

She cited a Supreme Court decision saying "the power to punish for contempt should be exercised on the preservative and not vindictive principle."

She said that as a member of the executive branch, Gonzales should not have been cited for contempt because co-equal branches of government were "not subject to contempt powers against each other."

Executive privilege

Ermita said the letter he sent to the Senate blue ribbon committee stated "specific provisions" of the law on why Gonzales could not be compelled to answer the senators' questions on the Venable contract.

He said these included the law on the exercise of executive privilege, the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, and the observance of confidentiality, "especially since Secretary Gonzales is a member of the executive and the factotum of the President."

Ermita said that he had seen and talked with Gonzales, and that the latter "seemed OK."

In a statement he issued later in the day, Ermita said Gonzales' inability to answer certain questions at the Sept. 21 hearing was "based on national security and executive privilege."

Disrespect for Senate

"The rule on executive privilege is rooted in the principle of separation of powers of the co-equal branches of government. It exempts responsible officials from disclosing sensitive and delicate information," Ermita said.

He said executive privilege "applie[d] to national security matters."

"This kind of information cannot be pried open by a co-equal branch of government," he said.

Ermita said the position taken by Gonzales should not be taken as disrespect toward a co-equal branch of government.

"Instead, it should be taken as fealty to the areas of responsibilities allocated to the different departments of government by the framers of the Constitution," he said.

But Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said Malacañang was showing disrespect for the chamber by demanding that it release Gonzales from its custody.

"Malacañang is not respecting the Senate as a co-equal branch. Disrespect did not begin with us. It began with a secretary refusing to answer questions and giving evasive answers," Pangilinan said in an interview.

"They wish respect from a co-equal branch when they're not willing to give it themselves," he said.

Sen. Richard Gordon said he echoed his colleagues' sentiments during a phone conversation with Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on political affairs, late Thursday night.

From Gordon's recollection, Claudio made the call to say that the Senate "should take pity on Gonzales because he is sick."

"I told him that the Senate couldn't do anything about it because [Gonzales'] conduct was contemptuous by refusing to answer questions," Gordon said.

Asked how long Gonzales would be held in Senate custody, Gordon said: "As long as necessary ... until he speaks out."

Gordon went so far as to suggest that the government should start looking for a new national security adviser, saying Gonzales' behavior at the hearing and medical condition had raised questions on his fitness.

"In fairness to our country, we need a better national security adviser. We can find a better one," he said.

Futile move

The senators also scoffed at the move by Gonzales' family to question his detention before the Supreme Court.

Pangilinan predicted that the move would be futile.

"The solution to the impasse is very simple. Secretary Gonzales should respond to the senators' questions, be candid and forthright. He's a public official; he must account for his acts," Pangilinan said. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Fishers' group snub NBI on dump issue

By Blanche S. Rivera

THEY ATE BANANAS AND invoked their right to silence.

Members of the militant fisher folk group Pamalakaya yesterday snubbed the National Bureau of Investigation's (NBI) summons for them to explain their continued blockade of a barge carrying garbage from Navotas and Manila.

The 13 Pamalakaya members instead appeared in a press conference yesterday, eating bananas and lambasting Environment Secretary Michael T. Defensor for allowing the operation of a controlled dump near fishponds in Obando, Bulacan.

Pamalakaya-Bulacan chair Ricardo de Armas said he and 12 others skipped the hearings set on Sept. 21 and 22 upon the order of their lawyers.

"The intervention of the NBI in the case is highly questionable, and Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco's allegations against us are purely acts of political harassment and plain character assassination," de Armas said in a statement.

Besides De Armas and his brother Sonny, the NBI also issued subpoenas to Celso Balasta, Obet Calbadores, Orlando de Vera, Adriano del Rosario, Racelito San Diego, Rey Silangan, Nading dela Cruz, Arthur Burgos, Isidro dela Cruz, Cecilio Alcantara and Virgilio del Rosario.

Pamalakaya said Tiangco had asked the NBI's help in stopping protest actions against dumping in the 11-hectare former fishpond being operated by the Philippine Ecology Systems Inc. (PHILECO).

The group said Tiangco had become "desperate" after a regional trial court in Malolos City junked last week his petition to stop the Obando municipal government from enforcing resolutions and ordinances against dumping.

The Malolos court said Tiangco failed to prove that this would cause irreparable damage to the garbage contractor and the municipality of Navotas.

The Pamalakaya members were summoned to appear before the NBI's antikidnapping, hijacking, and robbery division allegedly for committing illegal activities.

"How can we hijack, kidnap or rob a barge which is as tall as one of the buildings in Ayala? Give us a break," de Armas said.

Pamalakaya blamed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for failing to address the squabble between Tiangco and residents over the controversial disposal facility.

Inmates want visit 'rights' back

By Jocelyn R. Uy

"JUST AND HUMANE treatment" or the resumption of conjugal visits is what several drug convicts at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) are demanding.

In a letter to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), some 72 prisoners, mostly convicted for illegal drug use, complained about the current situation at Building 14 of the NBP.

"The conditions in this building are very inhuman and cruel. We have been deprived of our right to conjugal visits," the prisoners said in a letter to CHR Director Gilbert Boiser.

Building 14 was like any other building in the maximum security compound where "problematic" inmates were confined, according to NBP Supt. Juanito Leopando in an interview.

The 72 prisoners alleged they were transferred to Building 14, which they branded as the "isolation cell" for unknown reasons.

They claimed only prisoners who violated the rules of the penitentiary were supposed to be in the cell.

"We heard we were transferred here because we are all drug addicts," they said. Denying they were so, the inmates then asked for drug tests to disprove the claim.

They also complained about the three-layer screen separating them from visitors, as it limited their interaction with their family, saying the screen could give their children the impression they did something really unforgivable, detestable and loathsome.

The inmates wanted to know why death convicts enjoyed conjugal visits but they did not.

Leopando, however, told the INQUIRER there was no violation of human rights. Inmates who violated prison rules and regulations were brought to the building, he added.

Msgr. Robert Olaguer, NBP head chaplain, said the inmates were caught with illegal drugs inside the prison.

Leopando said the conjugal visit was not a right but a privilege given to the prisoners and could be cancelled anytime.

TOUGH LUCK
Residents of Baseco Compound in Tondo, Manila have to contend with muddy roads because of heavy rains in the past few days. Hundreds of makeshift homes have been rebuilt in the area after a fire ate up a big portion of the quarter in April.
REM ZAMORA

Caloocan studes warned against off-campus gang

POLICE YESTERDAY WARNED students of the University of the East in Caloocan City and nearby schools to be careful after a 17-year-old boy was killed while waiting for a ride on Samson Road.

"(Members of the) Bad Boys gang prowl the streets near schools, waiting… to grab a cell phone or stage a holdup," a police officer, who requested not to be identified, said.

UE Caloocan is just a block away from the city's police headquarters.

The gang, the police officer said, victimized students waiting for a ride or just walking particularly at night. Classes in the university ended at 8 p.m. He said the gang did not hesitate to harm victims who refused to give their belongings.

Some gang members had already been identified and apprehended, the officer said.

He added that victims had identified the group as behind the series of cell phone snatching and hold up incidents in the area.

"An operation for all the gang's members is ongoing," the officer said.

The most recent incident involving the gang, he said, was the stabbing of Marlon Julius Aquino of 431 PNR compound baranggay 173.

Police reports showed that charges had been filed against Ricardo Marquez alias Tosi, 20, and a resident of 107 A. Samson Road, in the city prosecutor's office.

Local police have yet to arrest the suspect known to be a member of the Bad Boys gang.

The police report said the stabbing was a case of mistaken identity.

The report added that the suspect stabbed Aquino after mistaking him for a member of a rival gang with whom his group had an ongoing feud.

The victim was standing in front of an Internet shop on Samson Road around 10:30 p.m. when he was attacked by the suspect.

BOTIKA NG BARANGAY NOW OPEN
FOURTEEN Botika ng Barangay (BnB) were opened recently in Quezon City. The BnB offers generic over the counter medicines, herbal medicines, and seven kinds of antibiotics at affordable prices. At the opening of one of the outlets were (from left): Rep. Nanette Castelo Daza, Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Vice President Noli de Castro and Berna Romulo-Puyat.

METROBRIEFS

No room for pests

NAKU HA—DISCRIMINATION!

RATS and roaches will soon be "banned" from restaurants and other business establishments in Quezon City, if city lawmakers have their way. An ordinance has been filed requiring all business establishments and construction sites in Quezon City to be "free" from pest and insect infestation. Citing the dangers of acquiring disease from pests and insects, Restituto Malangen and 12 other councilors proposed penalties for establishments hosting rats, mice, cockroaches and other disease-carrying pests. The ordinance is separate from already existing sanitation laws, with the city health department involved in the task of monitoring compliance of the ordinance.
DJ Yap

Down with sirens, blinkers

HWOo WooWoo!

ALARMED at the unabated cases of car thefts by fully armed men in the capital, the Philippine National Police (PNP) authorities yesterday directed Metro Manila police to flag down vehicles with sirens and blinkers. Checkpoints in major convergence zones, particularly in New Manila and Katipunan in Quezon City, would be set up for this purpose, said acting police chief Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon. Early this week, the Philippine National Police-Traffic Management Group warned motorists against a group of armed thieves operating in Quezon City. TMG head chief Supt. Ricardo Quinto said the car thieves use sirens and blinkers to intimidate car owners into stopping their vehicles. They would then introduce themselves as policemen, and then at gunpoint, declare a holdup.
Luige del Puerto

Sincioco children need help

Ruby Ann, Ronaldo Jr. and Ralph Ryan

WITH all her three children suffering from heart ailments, this may very well be Gemma Sincioco's greatest test as a mother. Ruby Ann, 17, is suffering from rheumatic heart disease; Ronaldo, 16, and Ralph Ryan, 8, both have rheumatic fever. The Sincioco children have also been diagnosed with lung ailments. Gemma estimated the medical expenses for her children to amount to at least P7,000 per child a month. Her siblings help out in the expenses since she and her husband Ronaldo Sr. are unemployed. Gemma is appealing to kindhearted readers for financial and medical help. Interested parties may contact them at 09062601811 or at 430-0564. Donations may also be sent direct to their bank account 14117-000091-4 through Real Bank, Timog Avenue, Quezon City branch.

Metro marks World Heart Day

THE PHILIPPINE Heart Association (PHA), along with Heart Foundation of the Philippines, the Department of Health and the World Heart Federation are expecting around 3,000 Metro Manilans to participate in various activities to mark World Health Day tomorrow. The affair will kick off with a fun run around the Rajah Sulayman Park in Manila. Manila government officials, medical professionals, practitioners in related fields and major health products producers like Nestlé Philippines, maker of NESVITA Pro-Heart, will join the event.

Best training center in Las Piñas

THE TECHNICAL Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) recently named the Las Piñas City Manpower and Skills Training School the best training center in Metro Manila. Mayor Imelda T. Aguilar will lead the awarding of certificates to the successful graduates at the city hall grounds in a simple ceremony today. The city's manpower and skills training school is a priority program of the mayor which provides quality vocational and technical education to underprivileged residents.

'Deals on Wheels' at The Fort

COME to the NBC Tent, The Fort, Global City on Sunday, and experience Equitable-PCI Bank's big car show event, "The D Wheels" with the latest car models and SUVs. Call your Personal Banker at 8784094, 8407000 loc. 2166 now and confirm your desire to avail/join this rare offering. Participants can also choose any car carried by participating car dealers with accompanying perks.

Hacienda Luisita: Cory's pain in the neck

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN Reform (DAR) is about to resolve the land-cum-labor dispute at the Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac.

Chances are, the resolution will favor the workers.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser C. Pangandaman says his office has chosen an option to resolve the controversial case involving the landholdings owned by the Cojuangcos, the family of former President Corazon C. Aquino.

Hacienda Luisita was not covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law passed in 1988 during Ms Aquino's term.

Instead of subdividing the 5,000 hectare land and distributing it to its farmer-tenants, the Luisita management distributed stock certificates to tenant farmers who were mostly illiterates.

The stock certificates turned out to be just pieces of paper. Until now, the tenant-farmers have not received dividends from the profits of Hacienda Luisita. They continue to be toil at the vast sugar estate of the Cojuangcos.

Last year, violence erupted at the hacienda when policemen and soldiers rushed through the picket line of striking workers at the hacienda. Seven people were killed.

The only comment that Ms Aquino made in reaction to the violence was that she would pray that peace would come to the family-owned farm.

Pray, my eye! Ma'am, you can pray all you want but if you don't love your fellowmen, especially those working for you in your hacienda, will God listen to your prayers?

You can't even solve the labor problem in your hacienda, and yet you want to solve the problem of the entire country?

There is a term that aptly describes what the former President is doing in these unstable times: Hypocrisy.

***

Ms Aquino used to be a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo. She supported her policies from Day One when GMA was proclaimed Chief Executive at EDSA 2.

What went wrong? Why has Tita Cory joined the clamor for GMA to resign?

The reason is Hacienda Luisita. Ms Aquino perceives that GMA has not done enough in helping the family resolve the labor-land dispute at Hacienda Luisita. She thinks Ms Arroyo has not ordered her labor secretary to intervene in the dispute, by tilting towards the Luisita management.

Ms Aquino crossed the bridge during the controversy about the "Garci" tapes by joining in the popular clamor for GMA's resignation.

But the administration is not without its built-in advantages. It's getting back at the former President by digging up her own skeleton in the closet, the dispute at Hacienda Luisita.

***

Let's look back to another irregularity perpetrated in the past to save Hacienda Luisita from trouble.

Of course, the first irregularity was the Cojuangco's going around the Agrarian Reform Law by distributing those useless stocks to their tenant-workers when they should have subdivided the vast hacienda among the workers.

The other irregularity was the alleged diverting of the rampaging lahar flow in the 1990s so that it would not directly hit Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac. The outcome of such a gigantic task: Bacolor, Pampanga became the basin of the destructive lahar.

I came to know about this because I talked with some engineers at the Department of Public Works and Highways.

I don't know how Ms Aquino's family could sleep soundly with this at the back of their minds.

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Days numbered for Panay Avenue trees

By DJ Yap

ONLY A HANDFUL of trees and some two dozen coconut palms still remain on Panay Avenue, Quezon City. Most of them were cut down by a construction firm to widen the road connecting Timog Avenue and Edsa.

But two environmentalists are waging a lonely battle to keep them standing.

For more than a year now, the trees on Panay Avenue stood in the middle of a legal battle between their protectors and a construction company contracted by the city government for a road-widening project.

Bienvenido Ejercito and Jose Martinez, long-time residents of Barangay South Triangle, are racing against time in their bid to keep Panay's trees alive.

In October, the 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) issued by the Court of Appeals against M.R. Vargas Construction will expire. The appellate court temporarily barred the company from cutting the trees on a petition by the two tree lovers.

Ejercito and Martinez accused M.R. Vargas workers of cutting almost 55 trees, including narra, mahogany, ipil-ipil and Shanghai beauty species without permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA),

An April 12 tree inventory of Panay Avenue by the Department of Environment Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) showed that some 23 trees were "lost" or cut down while nine trees were "damaged" or had exposed roots.

Before the DENR could conduct another inventory, Ejercito counted only about five trees left. Though the 24 coconut palms seemed mostly intact, Ejercito claimed about five were cut.

No permit needed

Quezon City road construction division chief Ernesto Salvador, however, said M.R. Vargas did not need a permit from the DENR.

He cited a 2004 letter by DENR-NCR regional executive director Corazon Davis saying the authorized representative of the head of agency or political subdivision with jurisdiction over the area could approve the cutting of trees on public roads for public safety, as provided for in Presidential Decree 953.

M.R. Vargas project manager Emmanuel Espiritu said the company donated several saplings to the city parks administration, in exchange for the trees they cut down.

He admitted that the PCA had yet to give them a permit for the cutting of the coconut palms, though the company had already paid the fees.

In 2004, the city government approved the widening of the Panay Avenue carriageway to 12 meters from the original six, consisting of four lanes. Four meters on each side of the road would be set aside for sidewalks, greening and beautification.

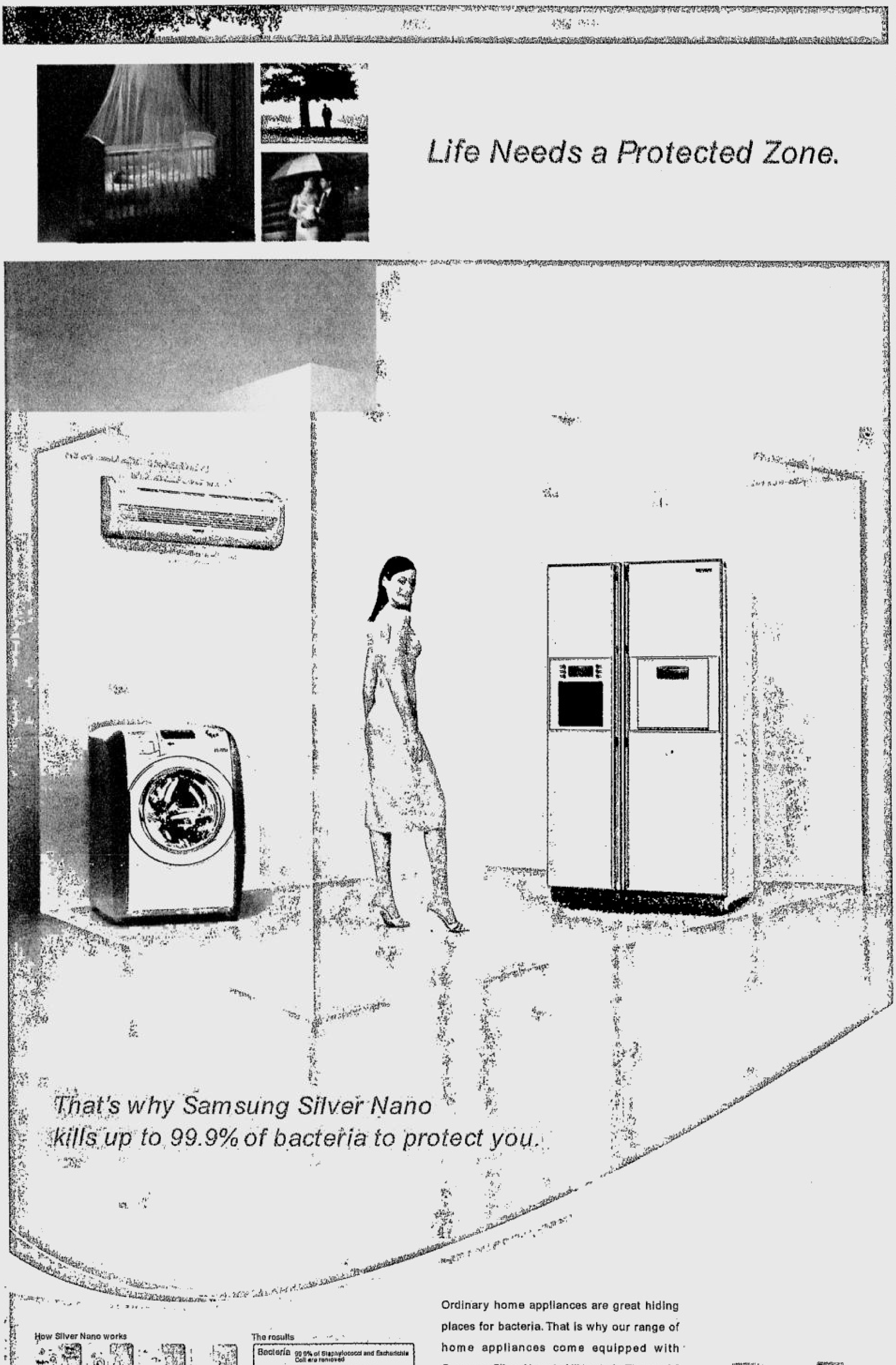
Alternate road

In a 2005 letter to the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee secretary, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said the infrastructure project, covered by the 2004 city budget, was expected to decongest Panay Avenue and serve as an alternate road to the congested Quezon Avenue. Quezon City awarded the multimillion peso contract to M.R. Vargas.

In 2004, Ejercito and Martinez filed for an injunction before Judge Marie Christine Jacob of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 100. They asked for a TRO to prevent the construction firm from damaging, removing and destroying structures, as well as killing and injuring trees along Panay.

The pair argued that the benefits provided by the trees to the largely residential area far outweighed the advantages of widening Panay Avenue. The TRO was granted on Oct. 6 but Jacob nullified the same order on Nov. 8, after the respondents claimed the court had not lawfully acquired jurisdiction over them due to an invalid serving of the summons.

The case has since moved to the Court of Appeals as Ejercito and Martinez filed a petition for certiorari protesting Jacob's decision. They later petitioned for a TRO and preliminary injunction against M.R. Vargas to stop the cutting of trees. The TRO was granted on Aug. 5. Though only a few weeks are left before the TRO expires, the two remain hopeful the remaining trees of Panay Avenue can be saved.



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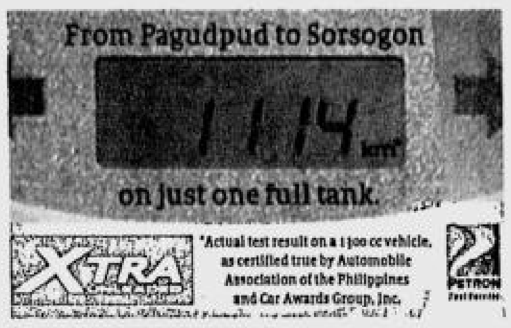
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PETRON

EUPHORIA sweeps over coach Louie Alas (top), the Letran Knights and their supporters. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Baseball facelift on

64
days to go before
23rd SEA Games

WHAT USED TO BE A FIELD OF DIRT HAS now become an oasis as workers rush to finish the facelift of the Rizal Memorial baseball stadium for the coming 23rd Southeast Asian Games. Baseball will be held in the Games for the first time and the Philippines is almost hands-down bet to win the gold medal. Close to three dozen workers are busy working on the field. A couple were even painting the walls where the names of baseball legends Babe Ruth and Lou Gerig are posted after hitting homers there decades ago.

* * *

The Philippine Sports Commission has increased the daily meal allowances of national athletes to P250. But the amount is being used by some athletes to also provide meals for their families because of poverty. Each national athlete has been earning another P6,000 monthly since last year as training subsidy. *Musong R. Castillo*

Knights rip Dolphins, put away NCAA title

By Jasmine W. Payo

AS THE FINAL BUZZER SOUNDED, LETRAN coach Louie Alas hugged his bunch of "blue-collar players."

None of them even made it to the Mythical Five, yet there they were with the NCAA basketball crown in hand.

Leading all the way, the Letran Knights showcased another balanced effort to blast the defending champion Philippine Christian U Dolphins, 62-54, yesterday in their do-or-die title match at the Araneta Coliseum.

Finals Most Valuable Player Boyet Bautista, Most Improved Player Aaron Aban and JP Alcaraz delivered 13 points apiece for the Knights, who clinched their 16th basketball title.

But there were others who deserved credit, including forward Jonathan Aldave and big men Frederick Rodriguez and 6-foot-7 Mark Andaya.

"They never stopped working hard," said Alas after the top-seeded Knights delivered a fitting finish to their phenomenal 13-1 elimination record.

"We practiced day in and day out," added Alas, who also steered the Knights' 1998 and 2003 championship runs. "We sometimes even practice thrice a day. No matter how hard, you'll never hear anything from them. They really showed resiliency and toughness."

"We really wanted to win, not just for the school but for our players who will graduate this year," said the 21-year-old Bautista.

And indeed, the desire was evident right from the tipoff. The Knights found their range early on, with Bautista opening with a three-pointer to spark a 7-0 start.

With their methodical attack, the Knights zoomed to their first double-digit advantage, 33-23, midway in the second period.

The Dolphins starters, led by Defensive Player of the Year Gabby Espinas, fought hard but could get only to within two points at 43-41.

Espinas, who averaged 20.5 points and 11.5 rebounds in the first two games of the best-of-three series, finished with 15 markers and eight boards.

"They were very tough," said Alas of coach Junel Baculi's wards. "People were saying that we can beat PCU, but it was easier said than done. They came out aggressive."

The Dolphins claimed Game 1 with a 79-74 triumph last Monday. Two days later, the Knights evened the series at 1-1 with a masterful 78-60 Game 2 victory.

The scores:

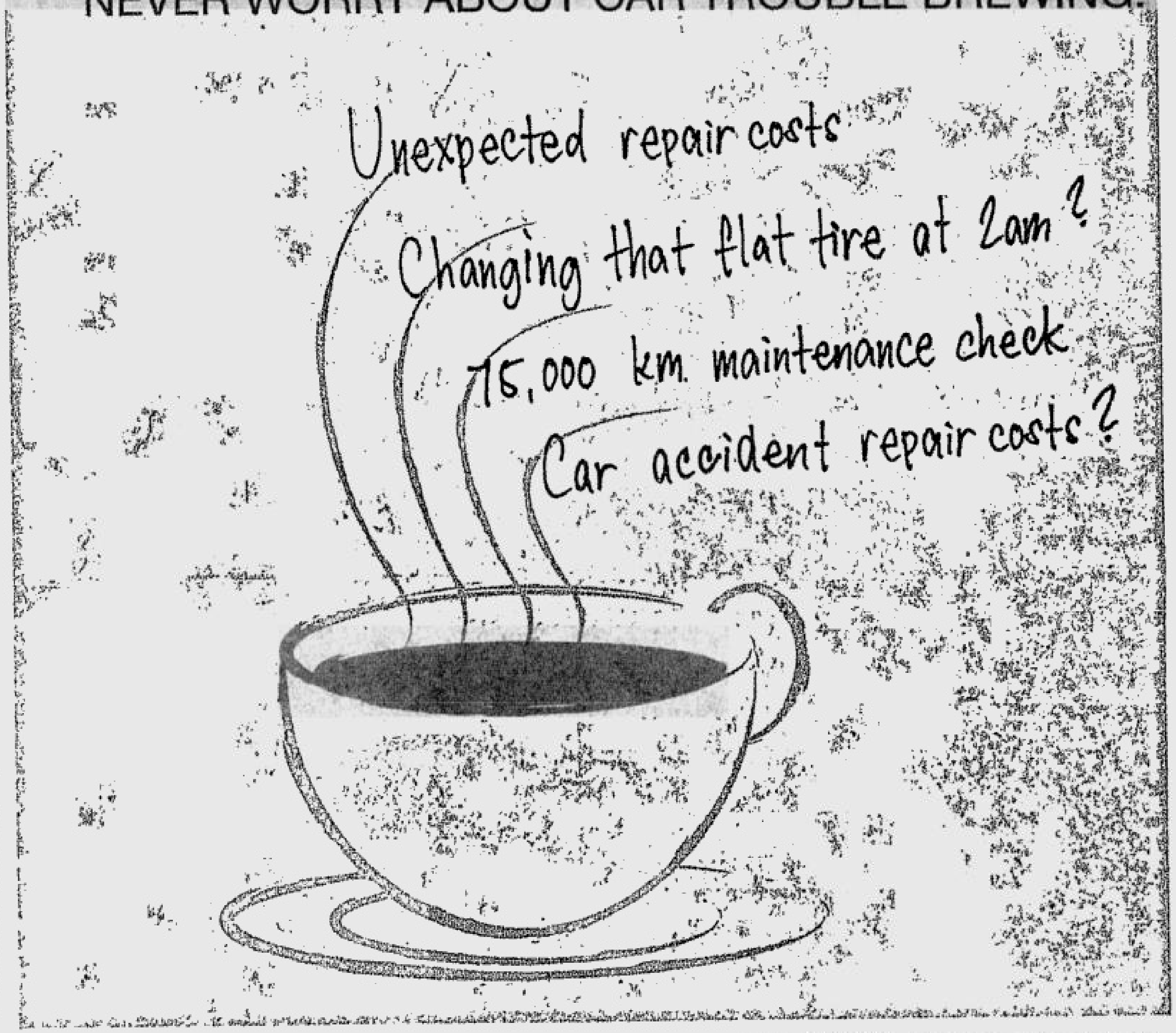
LETRAN 62—Aban 13, Bautista 13, Alcaraz 13, Rodriguez 9, Jazul 5, Aldave 4, Piñera 2, Andaya 2, Anabo 1.

PCU 54—Espinas 15, Sanz 11, Rotaga 7, Castro 5, Solis 4, Belga 4, Cecilia 4, Amparado 2, Santos 2, Salangsang 0.

Quarters: 23-18, 38-29, 43-41, 62-54

RP netter pulls king-size upset in ITF tourney /A22

Jojo, Liza big in HK /A23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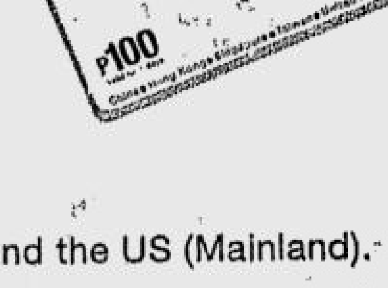

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A high of 171 SEAG golds for RP—Philsoc

By Musong R. Castillo

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE PHILIPPINES EXPECTS TO win a high of 171 gold medals and a low of 109, numbers good enough to easily win overall championship honors in the coming 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

This was the bold prediction made by the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee (Philsoc) technical committee yesterday after getting reports from the 39 National Sports Associations that will see action in the Games.

Harry Angping, the Philsoc technical committee chair and president of the Amateur Softball Association of the Philippines, announced during the Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines (Scoop) session at the Kamayan that he is merely repeating a report he made to the expanded Philippine Olympic Committee excom meeting held last Wednesday.

"This assessment is (based on) an honest-to-goodness assessment made by the NSA presidents themselves," Angping said. "We in the technical committee are in no position not to believe (this assessment)."

Angping echoed a similar announcement by POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, who said that the Philippines is capable of winning at least 150 gold medals.

A total of 441 gold medals will be staked in 41 sports in the Games slated Nov. 27 to Dec. 5, and the Philippines is aiming to win no less than the overall championship in this, its third hosting of the SEAG.

Olivarez pulls rug from under Aussie

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FINALLY, SOME GOOD NEWS FROM PHILIPPINE TENNIS.

Pablo Olivarez II showcased his vast potential as a future Filipino ace by shocking top seed William McNamee of Australia, 6-3, 6-3, yesterday in the quarterfinals of the Phinma-ITF junior tennis championship.

No. 2 seed Miguel Lorenzo Narvaez also hurdled his quarterfinal assignment by booting out Korean Choi Woo-whuk, 6-2, 6-2, but unranked Joshua Tan Ho bowed out to sixth seed Japanese Toshiya Suzuki, 6-2-6-0.

The 15-year-old Olivarez, grandson of Philippine Tennis Association chair Pablo Olivarez Sr., gets a chance to avenge Tan Ho's loss when he takes on Suzuki in the semifinals.

A consistent age-group champ, the fifth-seed Olivarez is the nephew of former RP team stalwart Eva Olivarez, a former SEA Games gold medalist. He is set to fly to Spain to represent the country in the Junior Davis Cup tie.

Narvaez advanced to the semifinals against Lee Tung-han of Taiwan, who ousted No. 7 Indonesian Lenz Theodor, 6-2, 6-1.

In the girls' singles, top seed Fil-American Denise Dy downed No. 8 Stephanie Vogt of Liechtenstein, 6-2, 6-3, to forge a semifinal showdown with Fil-Spanish wild card Edilyn Balanga.

The semis battle between the foreign-based Filipinas is expected to draw interest considering that the two are hoping to land spots in the national team for the Southeast Asian Games.

Balanga, whose parents hail from Pangasinan, ousted sixth-seeded local Noelle Conchita Zoleta, 7-6 (3), 6-3.

OLIVAREZ: Stunning victory for RP tennis

Gejon enjoys physical edge over WBA title foe

UNUSUALLY TALL FOR A MINIMUMWEIGHT, Filipino Eriberto "Yukka" Gejon will enjoy height and reach advantage when he guns for the World Boxing Association's 105-lb title of Japan's Yutaka Niida tomorrow in Yokohama.

The undefeated, 5-foot-5 1/2 Gejon was nearly four inches taller and had a four-inch edge in reach over the 5-2 Niida during their medical examination Thursday afternoon.

Despite his physical advantages, Filipino ring icon Manny Pacquiao said Gejon (21-0-1 with 13 knockouts) should match the expected aggressiveness of Niida, who is making the third defense of his crown before a partisan crowd.

Gejon should use "more combinations if he wants to become a matured, all-around fighter," Pacquiao said in an interview before he left for Japan to cheer for the Filipino challenger.

"*Dapat may* combination *talaga siya. Di yung paisa-isang suntok lang* (He has to throw combinations and not single punches)," Pacquiao said, throwing short punches into an imaginary target.

Pacquiao took a Philippine Airlines flight bound for Tokyo, accompanied by his wife Jinkee and Gejon's manager Rex "Wakee" Salud and some friends. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

PACQUIAO

2 more Air21 aces going to Purefoods

By June Navarro

AIR21 IS POISED TO GET ANOTHER WINDfall of first-round picks in the next Philippine Basketball Association rookie draft.

The Express acquired a future first-round pick from the Purefoods Chunkee Giants after sending Marc Jean Pingris and Egay Billones to the San Miguel Corp.-owned ballclub, a source told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"Both parties have already agreed in principle," said the source. "They are just waiting for the signature of a San Miguel top-level management official to seal the deal."

By unloading the 6-foot-5 Pingris and playmaker Billones, the Express have trimmed down their lineup to 12 players while getting another pick which they could use to snag another marketable amateur in the draft.

Purefoods Chunkee has the option when to let Air21 get its pick in 2006 or 2007.

Sources said, however, the deal was just the initial step in Purefoods' bid to secure a big man of its choice from a sister ballclub.

It's no secret that Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio is in search of a legitimate post-up player to fill up the team's hole in the middle.

Sketchy reports said getting Coca-Cola's Ali Peek was one of the options being considered.

Since sister teams are prohibited from swapping players, Air21 could be used as a conduit to consummate a deal between Coca-Cola and Purefoods.

Django, Pagulayan arrange showdown

FORMER world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Alex Pagulayan stayed unscathed in the 30th Annual US Open 9-Ball Billiard Championships at the Chesapeake Conference Center in Virginia Thursday night. But one of them has to take a fall in the next round. The 41-year-old Bustamante trounced American Larry Nevel, 11-7, to arrange an all-Filipino showdown with Pagulayan, an 11-3 winner over Puerto Rican Miguel Laboy in the round of 32 on Friday. Early qualifier Efren "Bata" Reyes was battling defending champion Gabe Owen of the US in the featured match of the winners' bracket at presstime late Thursday. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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RP tracksters facing juniors?

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

A DILIGENT COLLEAGUE WHO REGULARLY surfs the Internet said he won't be surprised if Patafa president Go Teng Kok achieves his medal forecast for the Manila Southeast Asian Games set to start Nov. 27 this year.

"Sixteen gold medals, if my memory serves me right," the columnist said. "GTK will get his two palms-ful of gold medals."

This is because Malaysia and Thailand, Southeast Asia's athletics powers, will only be sending their junior athletes to compete. My colleague said he got this info from the Internet.

"The coaches of the two countries said the athletes will be coming here to train, the SEA Games being the lowest level of competition in the continent, according to them. I know these two coaches personally," the scribe said.

* * *

IOC representative Franz Elizalde did not explain why he did not feel too optimistic about the outcome of POC president Peping Cojuangco's mission to the Fiba head office in Switzerland.

Elizalde did mention, however, that Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann probably has all the clippings of the media attacks on the Fiba which were published in Philippine newspapers.

Cojuangco and POC chair Robert Aventajado are flying to Geneva next week to seek the lifting of the Fiba ban on the Philippines.

It was Elizalde who arranged the meeting.

* * *

Vintage's Bobong Velez, who staged the first Ateneo-La Salle Dream Game during his salad days, believes this match has now become a major national social event.

"Do you realize that we first did this 30 years ago? We're doing it again on Dec. 8—8 PBA and 4 UAAP cagers from both schools will play against each other, with a legends game serving as appetizer," said Bobong.

Mezze in Greenbelt, a restaurant Bobong owns, is converted, on certain days, into a sports bar of sorts where SRO UAAP games are shown live on a wide screen.

* * *

"Woe unto them who utter harsh words against UE!" This prayer (curse?) spewed from the e-mail sent by Dick Ranay, obviously a UE alumnus.

"Last year, when the UAAP awarded the Coach of the Year title to Franz Pumaren, in spite of the fact that his younger brother Dindo had been voted the winner, did anybody hear anything from us?

"I'm sure most people will agree with me if I say that Dindo was far more deserving. Imagine a bunch of rookie players being led by a rookie coach to the UAAP Final Four. Such accomplishment is far greater than a 7-0 sweep in the second round by a team which had Mark Cardona and some outstanding veterans in its lineup. I just hope Dindo will be given the recognition due him this year."

* * *

Giovanni Nicolasora (is he Fil-Italian?), Customer Care Officer of BCI Asia Construction Info Pte. Ltd, and "a big PBA fan for almost three decades," sent us an e-mail with a long list of questions and comments.

For starters, Gio aired his concern about the dwindling PBA attendance. "Does commissioner Noli Eala have a program to counteract this downhill trend?" he asked. "Marketing man Jude Turcuato has to be more innovative to bring back the fans (Jude has quit the PBA and joined Solar Sports, where he says he's happier) and the quality of the games should also be improved."

Was I in favor of the last Shell trade involving marquee players Tony de la Cruz and Rich Alvarez, Gio wanted to know. He said he heard that P16 million was included in the package which, he thought, was unfair to the other teams.

"*Sobra naman ang ginawa ng* Shell, because it was only Alaska that benefited from the deal. Alaska *lang ang pinalakas nila*. Foul *talaga 'yun*, as Buddy Encarnado of Sta. Lucia said.

Next, Gio inquired about the quality of this conference's imports. The recent batches, he said, "do not generate excitement at all. Gone are the days of the blind-passing Walker Russell, Tony "Hurricane" Harris, Dexter Shouse, Wes Matthews, Terrance Bailey, Carlos Briggs, etc..."

The quality of the All-Star Game could also stand some improvement. Up to now, Gio said PBA cagers do not know how to play in the All-Stars.

Asking if I could please interview rookie Alex Cabagnot, Gio reports that his nephew has played with the Fil-Am in the US and has rated his skills and talent as "way above that of Mark Caguioa."

INQBOX Question of the Week

September 21 Martial Law anniversary:
Do you agree that Ferdinand Marcos should be buried at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani? Why or why not?

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CAÑARE

DEL ROSARIO

Cañare, Del Rosario strike in HK bowling

JOJO CAÑARE AND LIZA DEL ROSARIO, BOTH MEMbers of the Southeast Asia Games-bound Philippine bowling team, shone with victories in two international tournaments in Hong Kong recently.

Cañare won the 31st Hong Kong International Open, her first international title this year, by beating Asia's No. 2 Wendy Chai of Malaysia twice in the final duel of the step ladder finals.

Del Rosario ruled the ABF Tour Hong Kong leg, beating another Malaysian, Lai Kin Ngoh, in the finals.

Finishing second after 16 games, Cañare outclassed Hong Kong's Vanessa Fung and then defending champion Putty Armein of Indonesia to earn a crack at Chai.

Cañare, sponsored by Ebonite, Dexter and MTBA, won the first match against Chai, 196-170, and was even more impressive in her clinching 258-202 victory.

Del Rosario, on the other hand, survived a tough draw for three rounds to reach the finals in the ABF Tour leg.

She downed Sarah Yap of Malaysia in the first round, 184-147, and then beat Fung, 216-199. She reached the finals by nipping Paulette Choy of Malaysia, 180-169.

Lai proved no match in the finals, losing 221-197 to Del Rosario, who is being supported by Columbia 300, Crown Asia, Freyssinet, Boysen Paints, Kegel Asia, Dexter and PowerBowl Bowling Center.

Nico Valderrama and Ditas Red, both from TBAM-Prima also shone in the Graded division.

Valderrama, PowerBowl's assistant manager and a teacher at St. Paul College Pasig, earned his second international title by winning the Graded Men's title with an average of 208, besting 21 other finalists. He also won the Malaysian Graded Masters last April. Red averaged 185 to finish second to Hong Kong's Carmen Cheng among the women.

Nomura bets end up behind Thais

Final scores:

808—Australia (203-211-203-191); 832—New Zealand (212-205-207-208); 836—S. Korea (208-211-205-212); 853—Thailand (214-217-207-215); 860—Philippines (212-213-215-220), Malaysia (217-215-217-211); 862—Japan (213-225-211-213); 864—India (216-219-212-217); 872—Taiwan (214-224-216-218); 879—China (223-223-215-218); 884—Singapore (217-225-223-219); 885—Pakistan (221-223-224-217); 911—Indonesia (228-231-229-223), Hong Kong (232-227-229-233); 916—Guam (232-229-233-222); 935—Bahrain (234-233-237-231)

NARITA, JAPAN—THE PHILIPPINES sputtered with a closing 4-over-par 220 to finish joint fifth again Friday, even as Australia reasserted its domination of the Nomura Cup with a 24-stroke victory over New Zealand.

Artemio Murakami and Juvic Pagunsan each carded 72s and Jay Bayron added a 76 as the Filipinos, using the event as gauge of their worth in the coming Southeast Asian Games, ended up seven strokes behind fourth placer Thailand and in a tie with Malaysia at 860.

"Pagunsan and Murakami just didn't click together," said national team coach Bong Lopez. "We didn't have much luck, because for us to contend, they both have to deliver as well as their backups.

Australia proved a cut above the rest as it ran away with the crown for the second straight time, closing out with a torrid 197 for 814 to beat New Zealand by 17 shots.

PAGUNSAN: Big round just once

Andrew Tampion fired a 65, Andrew Dodt shot a 67 and Korean expatriate Lee Woo-joon carded a 65 as the Aussies capped their domination of the event with an eye-popping 50-under total.

The Kiwis grabbed second place with an 832 after a 208, while South Korea slid to third with a 212 for an 836 in this event also known as the Asia-Pacific golf team championship.

Thailand, bannered by 16-year-old Anujit Hirunratanakorn and Chinarat Phadungsil, took solo fourth at 853 after a 215 as it showed its readiness to spoil the Philippines' title bid in the SEA Games slated Nov. 27-Dec. 5 in Manila.

Murakami and Pagunsan both needed to eagle the par-5 17th on separate flights to keep the Philippines ahead of Malaysia, also a rival in the coming Southeast Asian Games, which rallied with a five-under final round of 211.

The RP golfers, third in the first two rounds, were actually fighting for fourth place as they only trailed Thailand by two strokes at the start of the day.

But Murakami, Pagunsan, Bayron and Erwin Vinluan failed to come up with a solid start and struggled all day.

Vinluan didn't count for the third straight day with a 77.

The Philippines missed clinching solo fifth as Bayron, Pagunsan and Murakami all flubbed pin-high birdie putts on the 18th.

Actually, Murakami, who started with a 67 and 69, and Pagunsan, who sizzled with a 67 Thursday, had to fight back from two-over cards to save the team from being relegated to sixth place.

Lopez, assisted here by team captain Gen. Roberto Sabularse, said a minor change in the composition of the national team will be made after the RP Amateurs next week in Bacolod.

The top three spots, he added, are already a cinch for Pagunsan, Murakami and Bayron.

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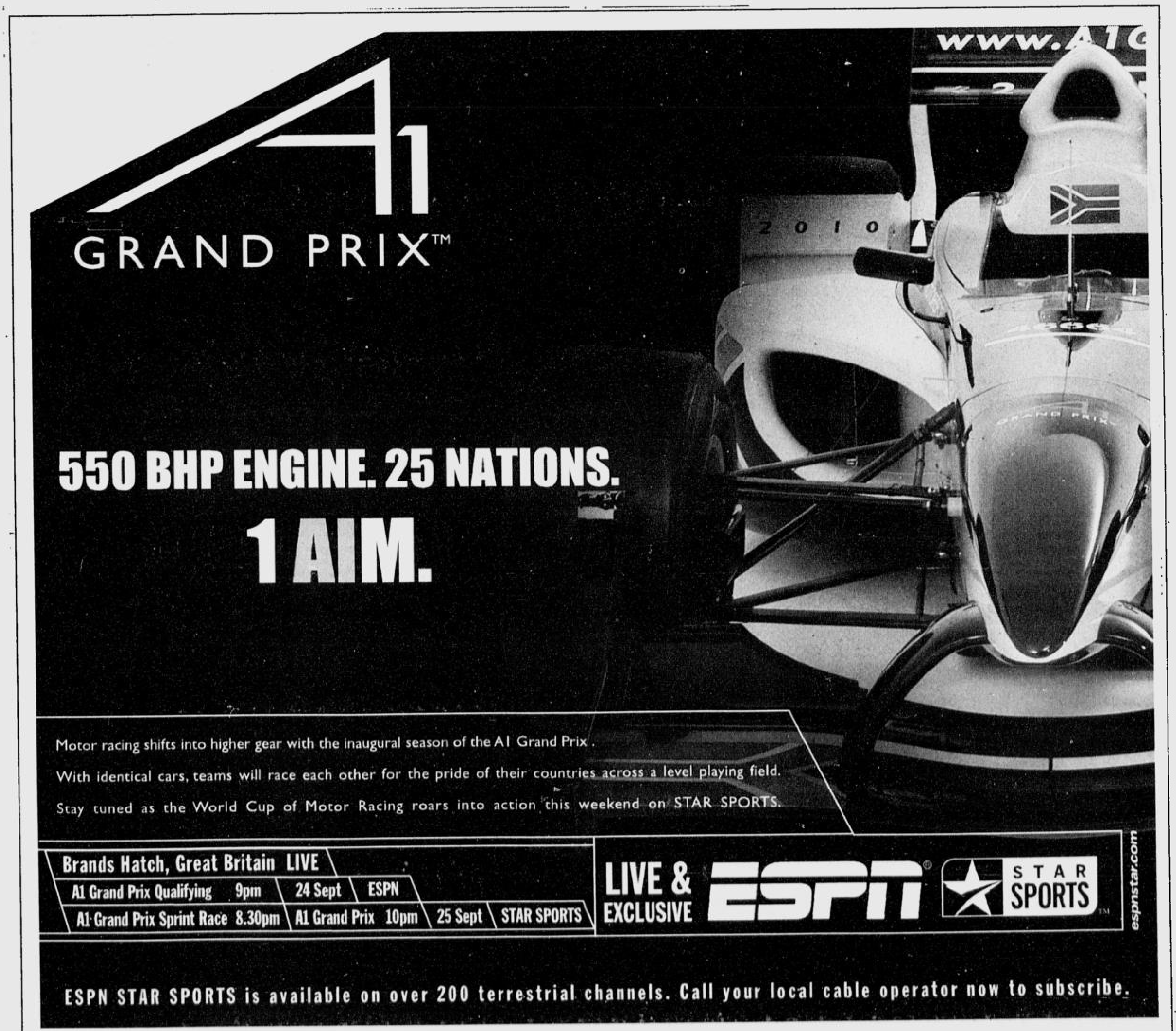

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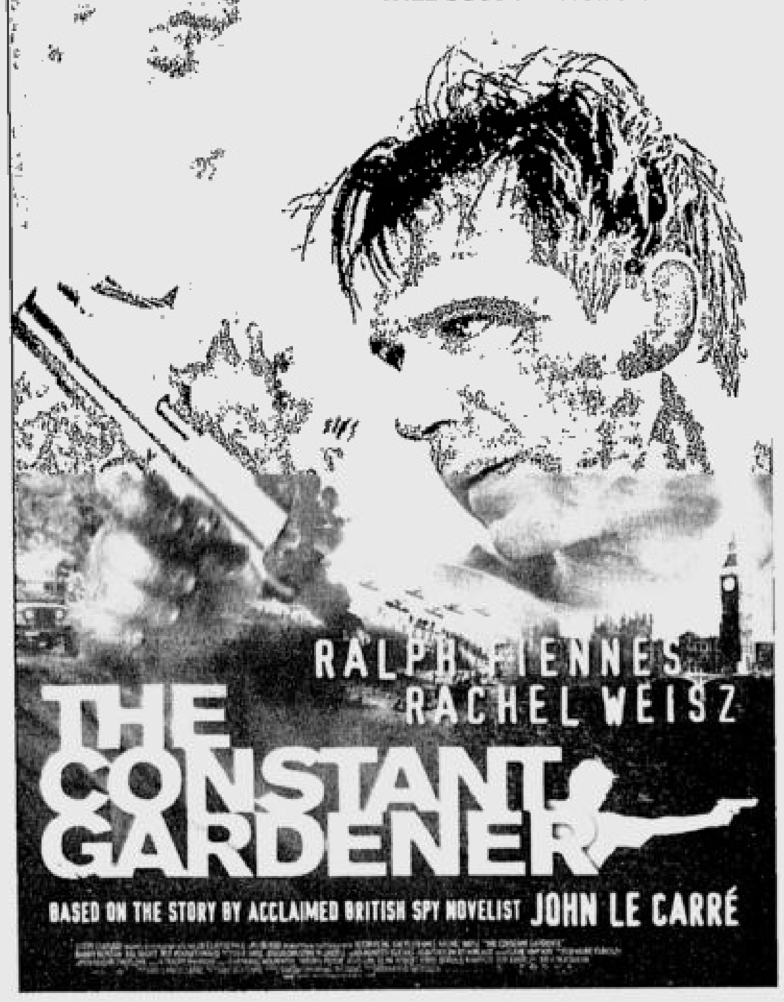
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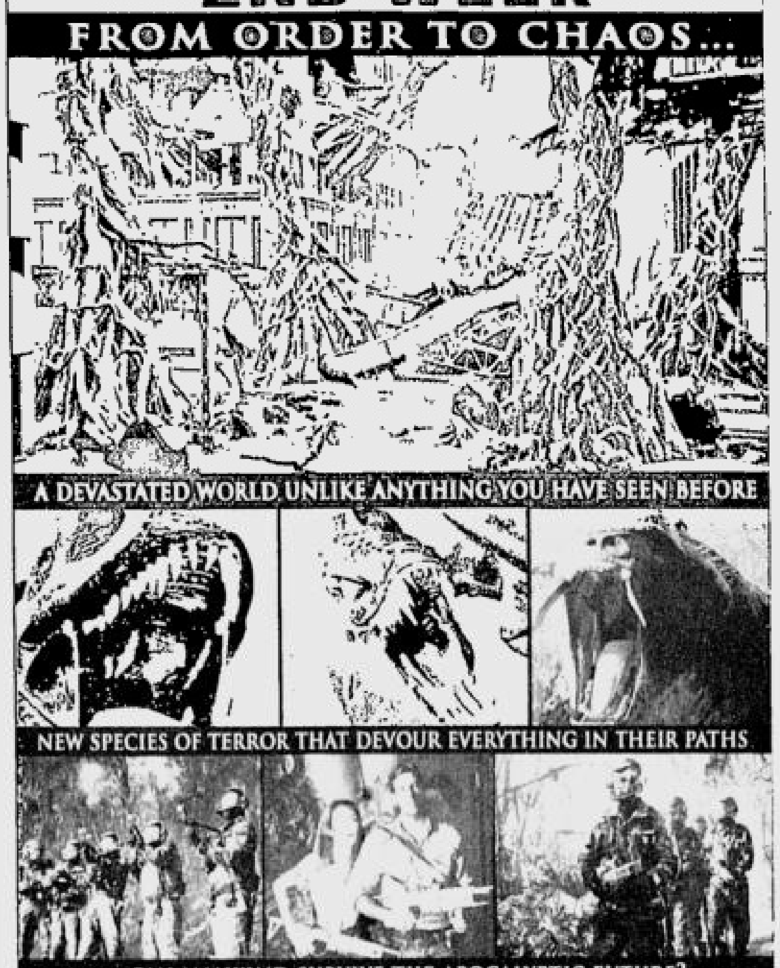
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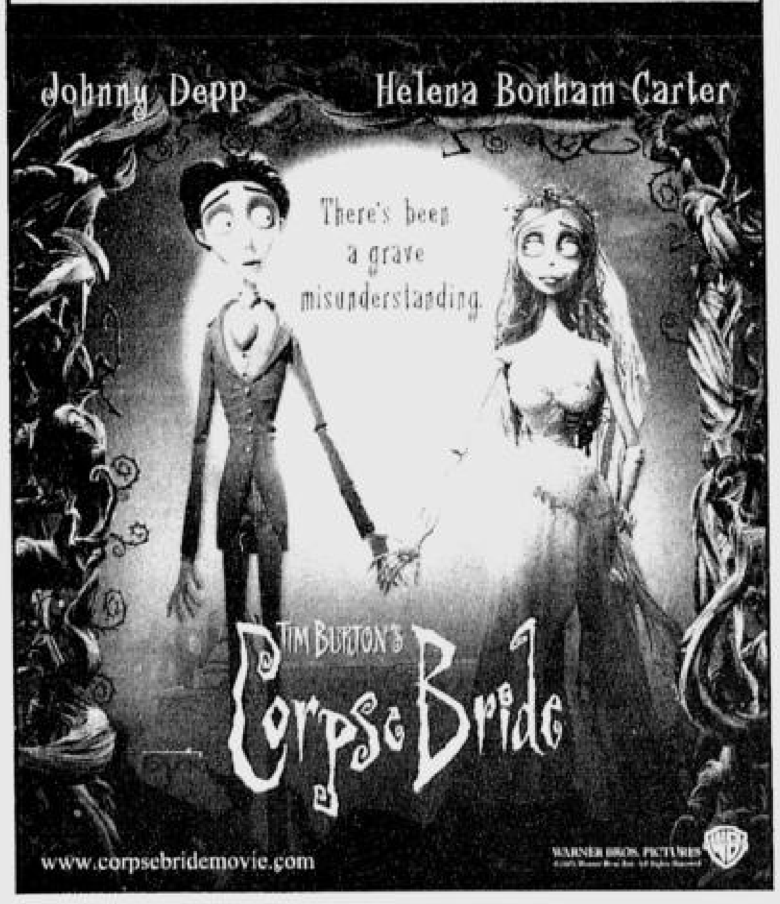
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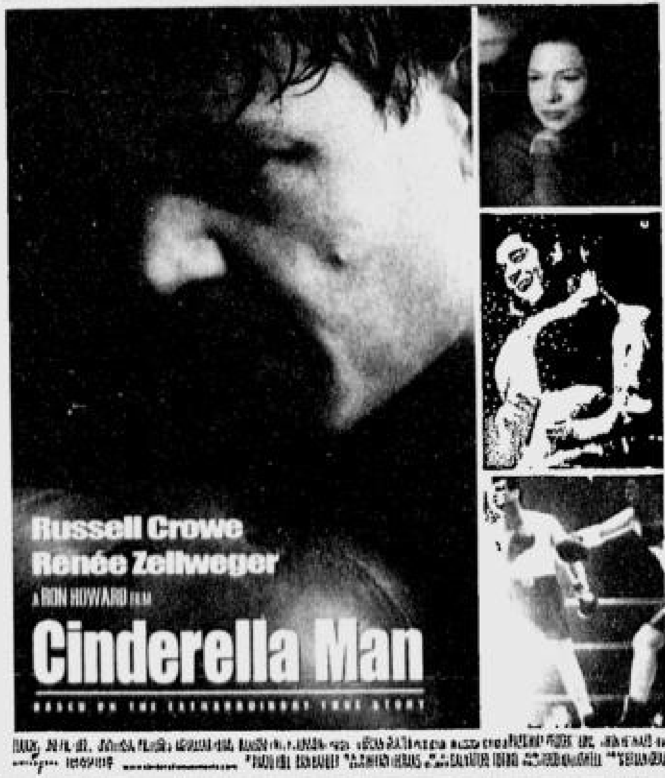
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Russell Crowe and Renée Zellweger are magnificent. Ron Howard's "direction is picture perfect."

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Malaysian aces vying in National Am golf

BACOLOD CITY—ALL BUT ONE MEMBER OF the Malaysian national team will see action in the Philippine Amateur Golf Championships scheduled to tee off Tuesday at the Negros Occidental Golf and Country Club here.

This has opened the door for an early test of strength between the Malaysians and members of the Philippine team with both sides fancied to slug it out for the gold medal in the coming 23rd Southeast Asian Games in November.

Veteran Siva Supramamiam, Mohd Sukree Othman, Lim End Seng and Mohd Amli Mihiyadeen will be flying in this weekend to play in the event sponsored by ICTSI, Aboitiz, Hanjin Group, Petron Blaze, Pagcor, PCSO, Philippine Airlines, Bench, Department of Tourism, Omega, C2 and San Miguel Corp.

Only Ben Leong, the 19-year-old Malaysian team spearhead, will miss the event because of a prior commitment with the David Leadbetter Academy in Florida.

The Malaysians finished second to powerhouse Thailand in the Putra Cup in Indonesia last year, where the Philippines was fourth.

The visitors are capable of foiling a championship romp by the homegrown bets.

Juvic Pagunsan will lead the locals in Marapara together with the other members of the RP pool. The top three players in the National Caddies' pool—Jonel Ababa, Mario Labajo and Joseph Labajo—will also see action.

The tournament will also stage a ladies division for the first time since its inception in 1961 with SEAG bets Frances Bondad and Anya Tanpinco heading the field along with Carmelette Villaroman and Lora Roberto.

PBL rookie draft attracts top stars

RISING STARS FROM VARIOUS COLLEGES, including Ateneo's 6-foot-7 Japeth Aguilar and La Salle's Rico Maierhofer, are expected to join the PBL Rookie Draft on Sept. 30.

Other likely hopefuls are Ateneo's Ken Barracoso and Martin Quimson, University of the East's Marcy Arellano, Luis Palaganas and Earn Saquindel, National U's Edwin Asoro, Howard Flor, and Jonathan Fernandez, Far Eastern U's Archie Mangahas and Adamson's Roel Hugnatan.

Eligible players from Letran and St. Benilde are also expected to take part since several Knights and Blazers have already played in the past for Toyota Otis and Welcoat Paints.

Mapua's Kelvin dela Peña and San Sebastian's Francis de Leon are also being considered.

This early, some 30 aspirants, including five Fil-foreign players, have already submitted their applications to the PBL office. Interested players must bring a birth certificate and 1x1 ID.

For inquiries, call Lanie Sagayap at 667-3008-09 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

BUHAIN

Buhain, Muros on dzMM

THE ONLY SIX-TIME Southeast Asian gold medalist Eric Buhain and former track star Elma Muros-Posadas will go live on air at dzMM's Sports Talk today, 2-3 p.m., at the ABS-CBN building on Scout Esguerra Street, Mother Ignacia in Quezon City. Named as ambassadors for the coming 23rd SEA Games here in the country, Buhain and Muros will be discussing and promoting the games to Sports Talk, hosted by former PBA player and ex-Sen. Freddie Webb. Busan Asian Games gold medalist Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, Mansueto Velasco, the 1996 Atlanta Olympic silver medalist, and Southeast Asia's fastest woman, Lydia de Vega, are three of the 12 ambassadors who already appeared in public promoting the games.

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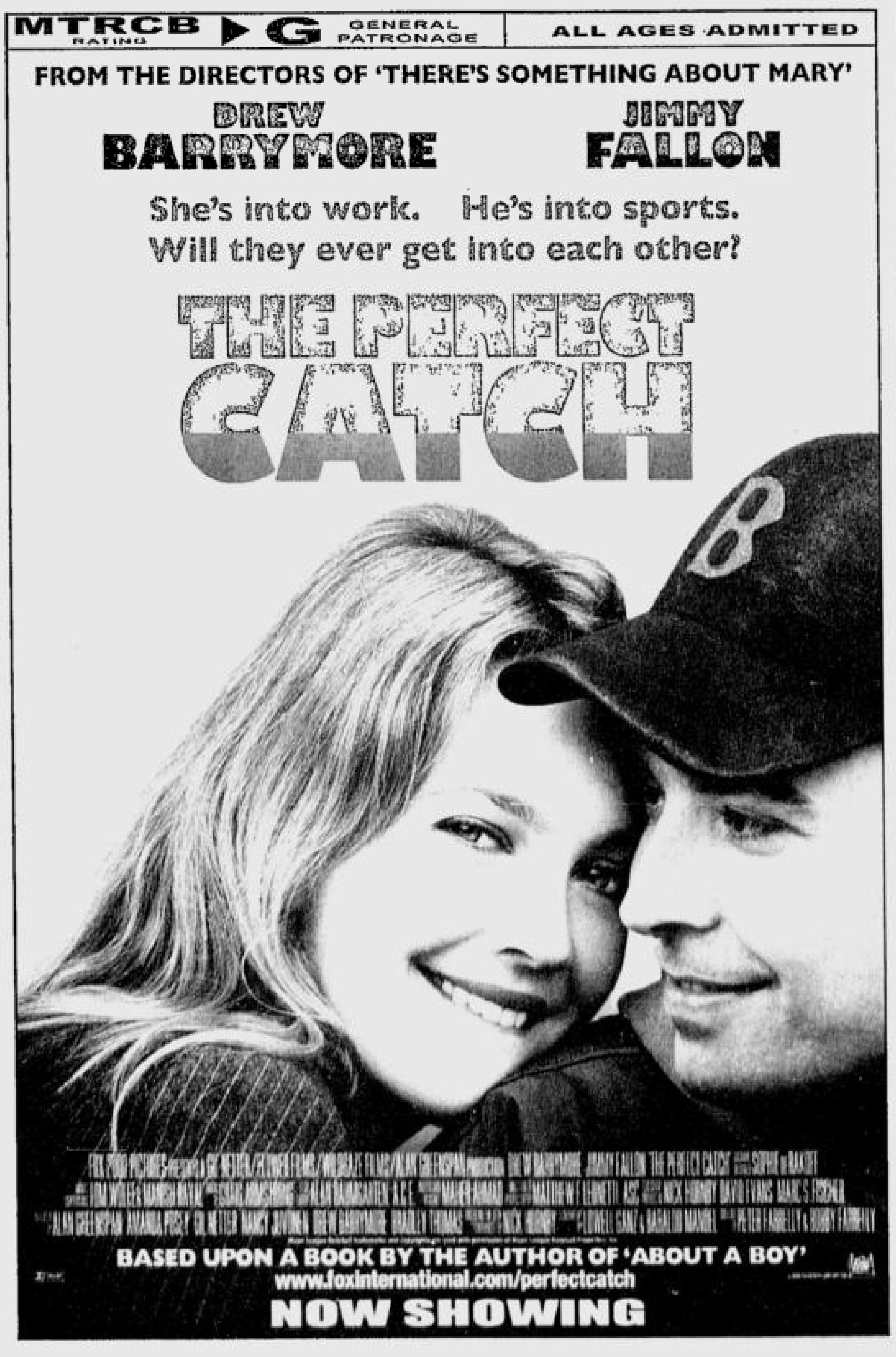

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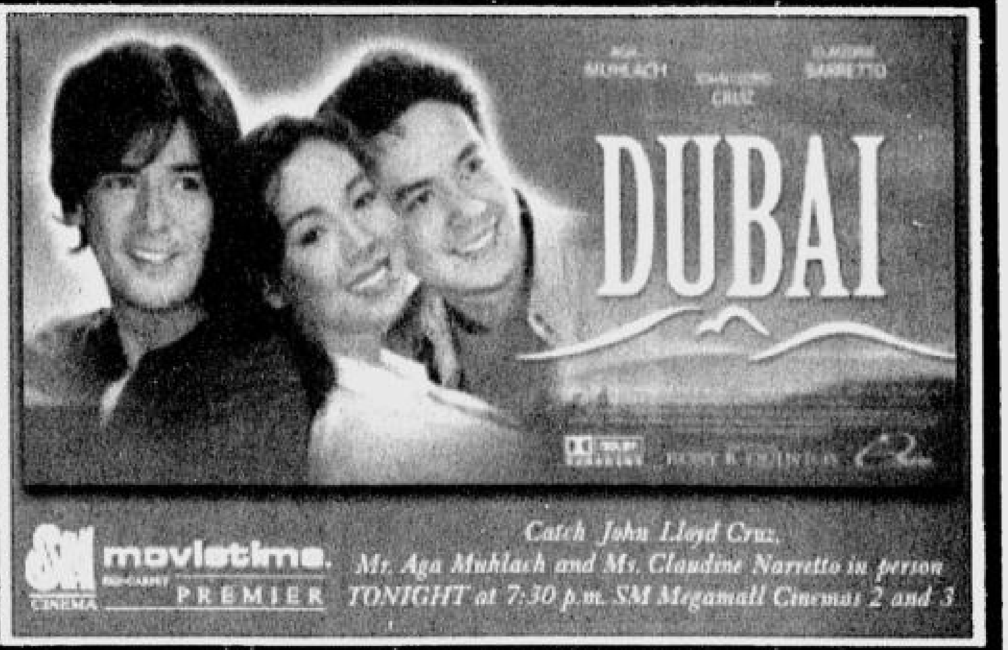

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1 BROTHERS GRIMM 10:30FS/10.40MF/12.50/03.00/05.10/07:23 09.20FS/09.30LMF/11.30END
2 DUKES OF HAZZARD 10:50FS/11.00MF/01.06/03.12/05.18/07:24 09.31LFS/09.38LMF/11.20END
3 CINDERELLA MAN 10:40FS/10.50MF/01.30/04.10/06.50 09.15LFS/09.30LMF/11.55END

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 DARK WATER
2 PERFECT CATCH
3 LAND OF THE DEAD
4 SOUND OF THUNDER
5 BROTHERS GRIHM
6 THE CROW 4: WICKED PRAYER
7 CINDERELLA MANA
8 CONSTANT GARDENER
9 BLADE OF THE ROSE
10 TRUMPETS: LITTLE MERMAID
11 LOVESTRCUK
12 THE CAVE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 THE CROW 4: WICKED PRAYER
2 CINDERELLA MAN
3 LONG WEEKEND
4 LAND OF THE DEAD
5 SOUND OF THUNDER
6 BLADE OF THE ROSE
7 DARK WATER
8 LOVESTRUCK
9 PERFECT CATCH
10 BROTHERS GRIMH
11 THE CAVE
12 RED EYE

SM NORTH EDSA
1 DARK WATER
2 BROTHERS GRIMN
3 LOVESTRUCK
4 CONSTANT GARDENER
5 LAND OF THE DEAD
6 SOUND OF THUNDER
7 PERFECT CATCH
8 BLADE OF THE ROSE

SM CITY MANILA
1 THE CAVE
2 CONSTANT GARDENER
3 PERFECT CATCH
4 BROTHERS GRIMN
5 LAZARUS CHILD
6 SOUND OF THUNDER
7 LONG WEEKEND
8 BLADE OF THE ROSE
9 LOVESTRUCK
10 THE CROW 4:1 WICKED PRAYER
11 LAND OF THE DEAD
12 DARK WATER

SM CITY STA MESA
1 I-WINESS DOCU FEST
2 LAND OF THE DEAD
3 DARK WATER
4 LOVESTRUCK
5 BLADE OF THE ROSE
6 THE CAVE
7 BROTHERS GRIHM
8 CONSTANT GARDENER
9 PERFECT CATCH
10 THE CROW 4: WICKED PRAYER

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 LAND OF THE DEAD
2 LOVESTRUCK
3 BLADE OF THE ROSE
4 DARK WATER
5 PERFECT CATCH
6 CONSTANT GARDENER
7 A SOUND OF THUNDER
8 BROTHERS GRIMN
9 THE CAVE
10 CINDERELLA MAN

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 DARK WATER
2 A SOUND OF THUNDER
3 LOVESTRUCK
4 LAND OF THE DEAD

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 LAND OF THE DEAD
2 LOVESTRUCK
3 THE CROW 4: WICKED PRAYER
4 DARK WATER

SM SAN LAZARO
1 LAND OF THE DEAD
2 DARK WATER
3 BROTHERS GRIMM
4 SOUND OF THUNDER
5 PERFECT CATCH
6 LOVESTRUCK

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 THE CAVE
2 DUKES OF HAZZARD
3 LONG WEEKEND
4 RED EYE
5 LONGEST YARD
6 LOVESTRUCK

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 SKY HIGH
2 VALIANT
3 LOVESTRUCK
4 LONGEST YARD

SM CITY BACOOR
1 RED EYE
2 LONG WEEKEND
3 LAND OF THE DEAD
4 DARK WATER
5 A SOUND OF THUNDER
6 LOVESTRUCK
7 THE CAVE
8 BROTHERS GRIHH

SM CITY MARILAO
1 LONG WEEKEND
2 CINDERELLA MAN
3 LOVESTRUCK
4 RED EYE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 A SOUND OF THUNDER
2 LONG WEEKEND
3 LOVESTRUCK
4 CINDERELLAMAN

SM CITY LUCENA
1 SKY HIGH
2 LOVESTRUCK
3 RED EYE
4 DUKES OF HAZZARD

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 RED EYE
2 LOVESTRUCK
3 LONGEST YARD
4 SHAOLIN VS STONE WARRIOR

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 BROTHERS GRIHM
2 DUKES OF HAZZARD
3 CINDERELLA MAN
4 A SOUND OF THUNDER
5 RESERVED
6 RESERVED
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED

SM CITY ILOILO
1 LONGEST YARD
2 RESERVED
3 ICE PRINCESS
4 LOVESTRUCK
5 SKY HIGH
6 THE CAVE
7 RESERVED
8 RED EYE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 THE CAVE
2 SISTERHOOD OF TRAVELING PANTS
3 SKY HIGH
4 RED EYE
5 CINDERELLA MAN
6 BROTHERS GRIMN

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 THE CAVE
2 LOVESTRUCK
3 SKY HIGH
4 DUKES OF HAZZARD

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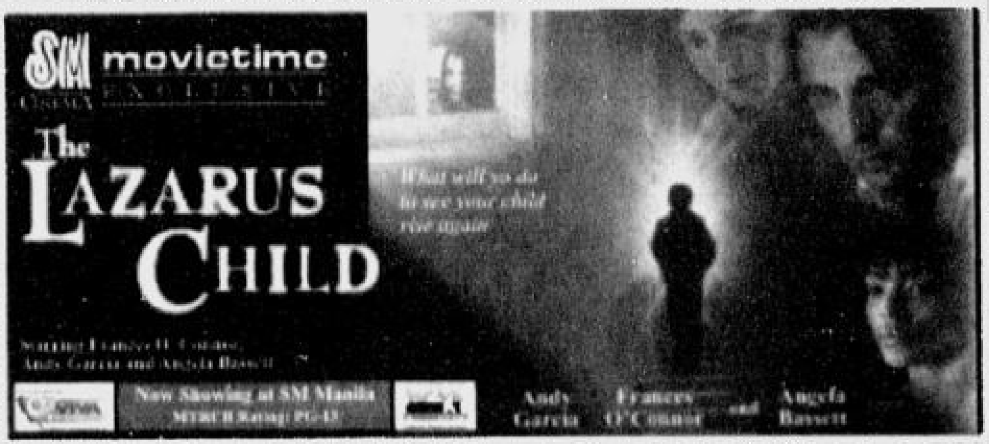

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Andy Garcia Frances O'Connor and Angela Bassett
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RP tracksters train abroad

THE NATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD TEAM wraps up its international training for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games in three tough tournaments in Malaysia, Korea and Singapore.

No less than Go Teng Kok, president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa), is accompanying an eight-member squad in the Singapore Open which kicks off today.

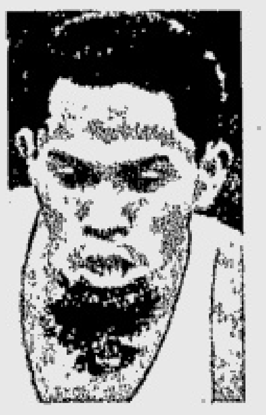
Marestella Torres, silver medalist in the recent Asian Athletic Championships where she also set the new Philippine record in the long jump, and Eduardo Beunavista, who holds the national records in three long-distance events, see action in the Daegu International in Korea while a 10-member squad is entered in the Malaysian National Open.

"After these three events, we will get a better picture of what we can do in helping the Philippines win the overall championship in the 2005 SEA Games. "I've predicted between 10 and 15 golds earlier, and I'm sticking to that," said Go.

The Filipinos' trips are all bankrolled by San Miguel Corp. and the Philippine Games and Amusement Corp. through the First Gentleman Foundation.

Torres, a non-winner in the 2003 Vietnam SEA Games, is now considered unbeatable in the long jump when the country hosts the 2005 edition late this year, her new 6.63-meter RP mark earning her the tag as the new "queen of RP athletics." Buenavista is out to duplicate his double-gold performance in Vietnam.

TORRES


BUENAVISTA

With Go in Singapore are 4x100 relay runners Ralph Waldy Soquilon, Alex Gabito, Albert Salcedo and Arnold Villarube, long jumpers Esmeraldo Pacheco and Henry Dagmil, high jumper Sean Guevarra and sprinter Honey Joy Ortaliz.

Vietnam Games steeplechase gold medalist Rene Herrera leads long jumper Joebert Delicano, decathletes Alonzo Jardin and Roberto Fresnido, javelin thrower Dandy Gallerero, high jumper Narcisa Atienza, relay runners Jiamr Aing and Midel Dique, hurdler Mary Grace Milgar and hammer thrower Jerro Perater in Malaysia.

"Most of our Filipino tracksters have shown their potential to win medals in the coming SEA Games based on their performances [internationally]," said Go. "I'll [be] in Singapore [to] see how the other Southeast Asian countries are doing."

Go also tasked his pool of coaches to scout the opposition—Luisito Artiaga in Korea, Isidro del Prado and Dario de Rosas in Malaysia and Joseph Sy in Singapore.

St. Clare 5 battles STI in playoff

GAME TODAY (*UM Gym*)
3 p.m.—STI vs St. Clare (srs)

ST. CLARE AND STI DISPUTE THE LAST championship berth in men's basketball of the National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu) in a playoff today at the UM Gym.

The winner of the 3 p.m. game will move into the finals against University of Manila, the league bully out to avenge its ego-shattering loss to St. Clare after winning 86 games in a row since the league began in 2001.

The Hawks made the finals after demolishing New Era University earlier this week.

"We are focused on extending our title-winning streak this time, which is one of the many milestones we can pull off in order to make this league more interesting," said UM president lawyer Ernesto Delos Santos.

Though the Saints have succeeded in blotting UM's slate, they have shown a tendency to take opponents lightly.

"We became the first team to win over UM this season. We want to follow that up by making the championships for the first time," said St. Clare president and Naascu chief Dr. Ernest Jay Adalem. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

ST swim meet gets under way

NINETEEN TEAMS WILL SEE ACtion in the Southern Tagalog Amateur Swimming Association short course championships, hosted by the San Pablo Mantas squad, today at the BJ Country Club in San Pablo City. San Pablo Mantas is led by retired Col. Jose Jamora, chair; Remelie Sy, president, and Louie Mangahis, director. Other officers are Liway Sanchez, first VP; Thita Bondad, second VP; Carmen Tolentino, secretary; Jenny Palma, treasurer; Oria Banagale, assistant treasurer; Josie de las Alas, auditor; and Aimee Palma, press relations officer.

4x4 rally series sixth leg blasts off today

THE LUZON 4X4 FEDERAtion stages the sixth leg of the Rallye Raid Series in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, today.

Dubbed as the First Science City 4x4 Rallye Raid, the event has attracted participants from all over the country with 4x4 teams coming from as far as Mindanao.

"This event is crucial for the municipality's tourism and sports development," said councilor Isidro Lopez.

"The active participation of the local government reflects the growing popularity of the sport," revealed Olson Camacho, founding director of the Luzon Federation.

The event, sponsored by Petron Rev-X, Silverwind and Bilstein, is set in three special stages, wherein participants traverse challenging terrain, using driver skills, experience, vehicle setup and geographical knowledge.

PCAP derby features top gamefowls

ONLY the best will be fielded on Monday in the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-stag one-day derby at the Makati Coliseum. The event will start at 5 p.m. with 70 fights lined up. VP Alegria Uma of lawyer Willy Villarica posted five wins last Monday to rule the PCAP third leg derby. Runner-up finishers with four points apiece were AS JU WG of William Go, BM Bulalayaw of Boy Marzo, Jaen Coliseum of Ellan Nagano and RJ Mulawin of Rudy Albano. Albano and Villarica currently lead the PCAP Stagfighter of the Year race with 11 points each. Meanwhile, the third National Cockers Association 7–Stag Derby unfolds on Oct. 4. Interested parties may call 896- 3545 and 895 -6475 for more details.

Roligon sets two events

THE ROLIGON Mega Cockpit unveils the "Ika-10 Taong Palaban 6-Stag Derby" today at 2 p.m. with 129 fights slated. After three elimination rounds, 31 participants lead the pack with two wins each. The event is sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone. Meanwhile, the 5-Stag Derby of Roligon owner Rolly Ligon is up next on Oct. 15, 17 and 19. Entry fee is only P7,700 but the total guaranteed prize is P1.3 million. The fastest win champion will also drive home an Isuzu Big Horn 4 X 4. Breeders may bring stags at Roligon tomorrow, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for screening. For inquiries, please contact 8332275, 8331638 and 8529812.

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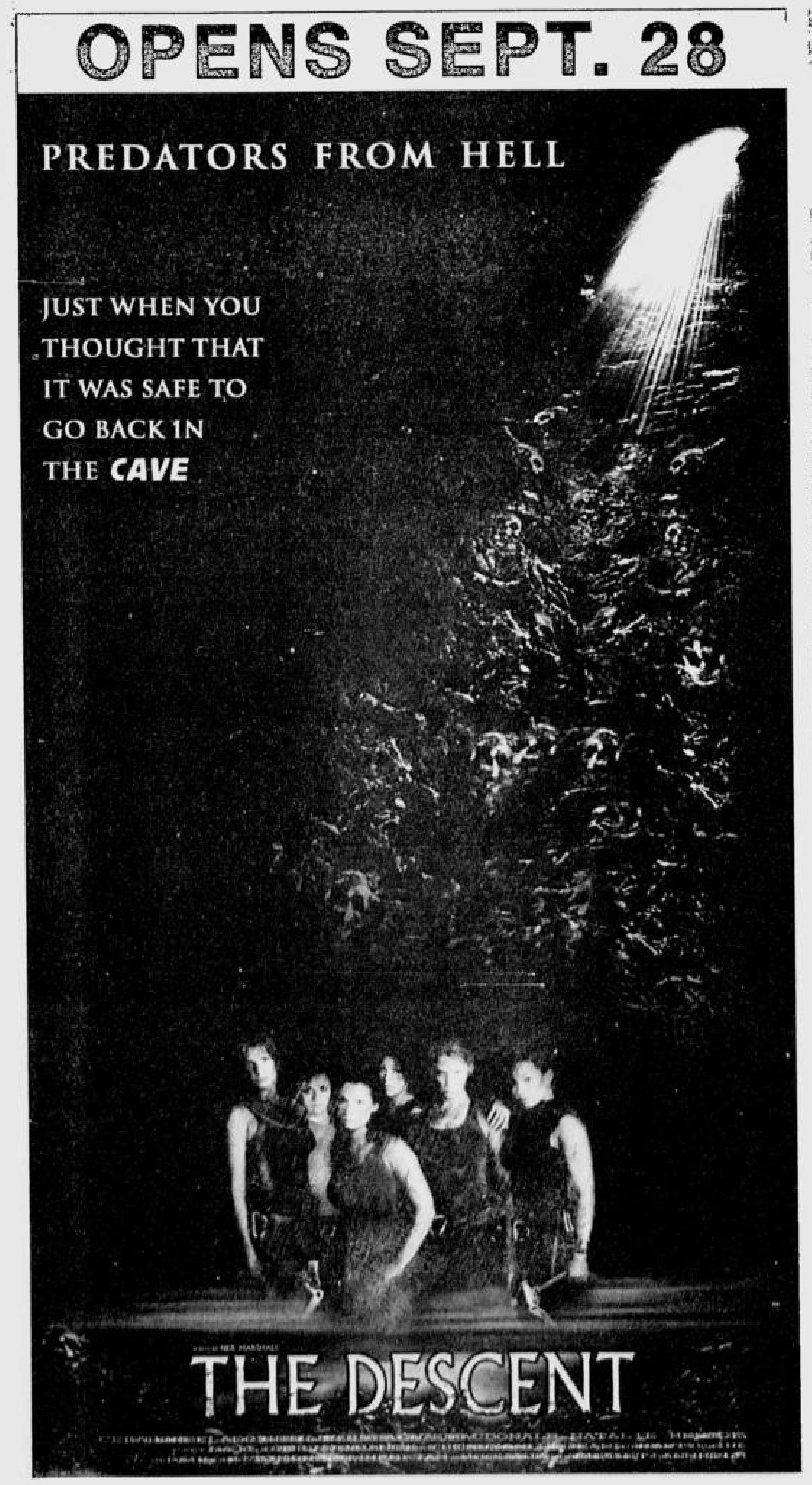
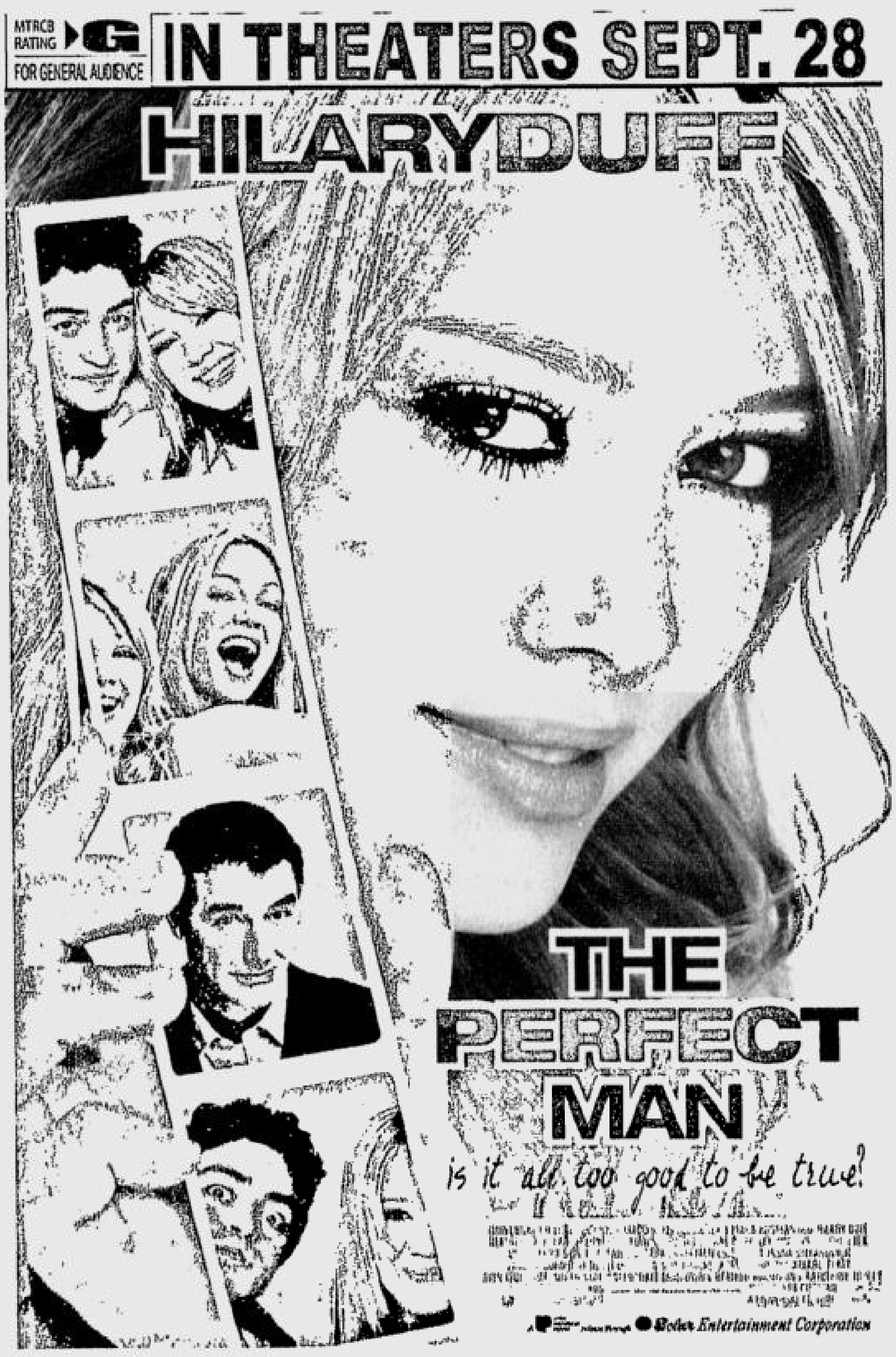
CINDERELLA MAN PG13 12:45,3:45,6:45,9:45	CONSTANT GARDENER PG13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	DARK WATER PG13 1:35,3:45,5:55,8:05,10:15
LAND OF THE DEAD R13 1:10,3:20,5:30,7:40,9:50	BLADE OF THE ROSE PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10,10:25	PERFECT CATCH GP 11:35,1:45,3:55, 6:05,8:15,10:25


OPENS SEPT. 28
PREDATORS FROM HELL
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THAT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK IN THE CAVE
THE DESCENT


MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE IN THEATERS SEPT. 28
HILARY DUFF
THE PERFECT MAN
is it all too good to be true?
Solar Entertainment Corporation

PHIL Mickelson, paired with Chris DiMarco, helps keep the US in striking distance. AP

PRESIDENTS CUP

International team seizes early lead

GAINESVILLE, Virginia—Retief Goosen and Adam Scott turned in a tag-team performance to bury Tiger Woods and Fred Couples in the opening match and the International team led the United States 3½-2½ at the Presidents Cup on Thursday.

Bringing up the rear were Mike Weir and Trevor Immelman, who birdied four of their first five holes in alternate shot for a dominant victory over David Toms and Stewart Cink.

There were still 28 matches left until the cup is awarded but considering how the International team typically starts at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Club, it was cause for celebration. In three previous trips to this golf course on the shores of Lake Manassas, the Americans have twice led 5-0 and once led 4-1 after the opening day.

"Some places it could have been worse," US captain Jack Nicklaus said. "Some places it could have been better. Tomorrow is another day."

In other matches, US Open champion Michael Campbell and Angel Cabrera beat Americans Kenny Perry and Davis Love III 2 and 1, Scott Verplank and Justin Leonard won 4 and 2 over Internationals Peter Lonard and Stuart Appleby, Phil Mickelson teamed with Chris DiMarco for a 1-up victory over Nick O'Hern and Tim Clark, and Jim Furyk and Fred Funk settled for a halve against Vijay Singh and Mark Hensby.

Scott and Goosen got this day off to a resounding start.

It started with a simple halve on the third hole, when Goosen hit a 60-foot putt to a hole that was just below a steep ridge. The putt was struck with such perfect force that it settled 16 inches from the cup. Then, it was a matter of waiting for Woods and Couples to self-destruct.

A poor chip by Woods cost them the fourth hole. Couples missed a 4-foot birdie putt so badly that it never touched the hole, falling two behind on the sixth. And when Scott made a 10-foot birdie putt on the par-3 seventh that juts out into the lake, the International team already was 3-up.

"The first match out is always important, no matter who you're playing," Scott said.

It was only the third time in 36 matches at the Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup that Woods was beaten without getting to the 16th tee. Neither he nor Couples played well.

"I was outclassed by three guys, and I couldn't help Tiger at all," Couples said.

It was the marquee match of the day, and the anticipation built as former US Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton stood on the first tee amid the wives and the heads of six major golf tours around the world.

Nicklaus was hopeful of securing an early point. Instead, he motored around in a cart and watched the International team ahead on the leaderboard throughout the day. *AP*

Posada lifts NY Yankees past Orioles

NEW YORK—JORGE POSADA HIT A TYING home run in the fifth inning, then added a three-run, upper-deck drive in the sixth and New York beat Baltimore, 7-6, on Thursday.

A night after moving past the Boston Red Sox to take over first place in the American League East division for the first time since July 18, the Yankees won for the 10th time in 11 games and opened a one-game lead with 10 remaining.

Mike Mussina (13-8) pitched for the first time since Aug. 29, when he left a start at Seattle with elbow inflammation. The right-hander allowed four hits in six innings, struck out six and walked none. Baltimore's only run off him came in the third, and it was unearned.

Al Leiter was charged with four runs in the eighth. With Mariano Rivera having appeared in three straight games, Tom Gordon pitched the ninth for his second save, allowing a two-out homer to Melvin Mora.

Gary Sheffield homered for the Yankees, reaching 30 for the third straight season and eighth time overall. *AP*

Payton joins Miami Heat

MIAMI, FLORIDA—THE MIAMI HEAT SIGNED veteran point guard Gary Payton on Thursday whose numbers have been steadily declining in recent seasons. Terms were not disclosed.

With his best years well behind him, the 37-year-old Payton had two stints with Boston Celtics last season, averaging just 11.3 points, his lowest total since his second year in 1991.

"We are very fortunate to have been able to acquire a player of Gary Payton's stature," Heat president Pat Riley said. "He is a proven veteran and will be a big addition to this team."

In Miami, Payton reunites with center Shaquille O'Neal and joins a team that has reloaded in the offseason after reaching the Eastern Conference finals in 2005.

Forward Antoine Walker, point guard Jason Williams and swingman James Posey all have been added in the offseason.

Payton played with O'Neal on the 2003-04 Los Angeles Lakers, who lost in the NBA Finals to Detroit.

Known as "The Glove" for his defensive prowess, Payton has been selected to the NBA's All-Defensive First Team in eight consecutive seasons from 1994-2001. *AFP*

Boxer in coma passes away

LAS VEGAS—AMERICAN BOXER LEAVANDER Johnson died on Thursday from injuries sustained five days earlier in a lightweight title fight with Jesus Chavez.

The 35-year-old's kidneys had failed and his heart was not pumping on its own when family members decided to remove him from life support, his doctor said.

"We had no further mode to improve his prognosis, so the family very correctly made the decision to withdraw care," Dr. William Smith said. "He passed away very peacefully."

Johnson collapsed on his way to the dressing room after taking a beating in his IBF lightweight title defense on Saturday. Doctors were operating on him within 40 minutes to relieve pressure on his brain, but he never came out of a medically induced coma.

Smith said he performed a second operation on Monday to remove a blood clot but Johnson was too gravely injured to survive.

"He suffered a very severe injury. The problem is that the injury was to the brain itself," Smith said. "In some cases, the punishment is absorbed by the skull, but in this young man's case, the brain absorbed the punishment itself."

Johnson's promoter, Lou DiBella, said Johnson's family members were present when he died. Johnson's father was his trainer and his brother was his manager.

"What a wonderful guy this was. And I've never met anybody so proud or so grateful to achieve his dream," DiBella said.

Doctors were initially unsure Johnson would make it through the night after being injured during the fight at the MGM Grand hotel-casino, but the next day Smith expressed cautious optimism after tests showed improvement in brain function.

Johnson spent 16 years as a professional fighter before finally winning a version of the 135-lb (60-kg) title in June. *AP*

LEAVANDER Johnson (left) takes a right from Jesus Chavez in what turned out to be his last fight. AP

Alonso nears F1 history

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL—Fernando Alonso is on the verge of his first Formula One championship entering this weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix, while Kimi Raikkonen must win only to have a slight chance of keeping alive his title chances.

"It is an important race in that I can become champion but if I don't win on Sunday it is not the end of the world. I will race many years to come," Alonso said.

"Only winning matters," Raikkonen said. "For some time we have been in this situation but the championship is not up to us even if we win all the races."

Renault's Alonso needs a third-place finish in Sunday's race to officially succeed Michael Schumacher and become F1's youngest world champion. A victory for Raikkonen would extend the title chase only if Alonso finishes below third.

With points on a 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis, there are a number of combinations that could give Alonso the title, most in the Spaniard's favor. He has a 25-point lead, 111-86, with three races to go and needs to leave Brazil with at least a 21-point lead.

Raikkonen is realistic.

"Of course i am interested in winning but it is not going to happen for the others to have three bad races in a row," Raikkonen said.

Alonso has already made F1 history as the youngest race winner and pole sitter when he did both in 2003.

He remembers his first victory.

"It was a good day two years ago in Hungary. That moment was the greatest achievement in my career," Alonso said.

He didn't win again until this year but made up for lost time with six wins in the first 12 races. He hasn't won since the German GP on July 24. *AP*

Injured Williams withdraws

BEIJING—VENUS WILLIAMS withdrew from the China Open ahead of Friday's quarterfinal, citing an injury to her left knee sustained in her previous match.

"It is a new injury. I decided to withdraw this morning," she said.

Williams was due to play Poland's Marta Domachowska, who will now advance to the semifinals.

Williams said she still plans to attend the WTA tournament in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, which begins Monday.

"So far, I think I will go to Guangzhou," she said.

Williams had to call a trainer to the court to treat her left leg during her win over Spain's Nuria Llagostera Vives on Thursday.

The China Open tournament has been beset by injuries. Serena Williams cited an existing knee injury as a factor in her second-round defeat Wednesday to China's Sun Tiantian.

World No. 2 Lindsay Davenport withdrew before the tournament began, saying she had a lower back strain, according to the Women's Tennis Association. *AP*

Taiwan Open: Que trails by 6

TAIWAN—TAIWAN'S LIN WEN-TANG SEIZED a one-stroke lead at the Taiwan Masters' second round on Friday, but is facing a strong challenge from title holder Thaworn Wiratchant, who is lurking four off the pace.

Angelo Que of the Philippines shot a 74 and trails by six with a 145 total halfway through the tournament.

Lin fired a three-under-par 69 at the $400,000 event on the Taiwan Golf and Country Club's suburban Taipei course. His two-day total of five-under-par 139 was one better than compatriot Lu Wei-chih.

Lu, who like Lin is searching for his first Asian Tour title, moved into contention with a matching 69 while veteran Lu Wen-teh, winner here in 1994 and 1996, carded a 71 for third place on 141.

Thailand's Thaworn, who won last week's Taiwan Open to regain his top spot on the Order of Merit, bounced back from a dismal 74 to shoot a 69 and tied for fifth place, in prime position for a weekend charge.

Lin, currently 24th on the Asian Tour in money ranking, has posted 11 career top-10s since 1998 but is dreaming of a maiden title.

"I think I have a good chance this week. I'm chipping and putting well but must improve my driving at the weekend," said Lin, who was tied 18th in last week's Taiwan Open. *AP*

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RP athletes take a break, frolic in Puerto Azul

THE PEOPLE OF CAVITE JOIN THE SPORTS community in rallying members of Team Philippines before they go to war in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games during a team-building activity hosted by the Puerto Azul Golf and Country Club in Ternate town today.

Gov. Ireneo Maliksi and municipal mayors are expected to lead Caviteños in extending warm welcome to some 600 athletes, who are taking a break from their strenuous training to take part in the excursion dubbed "Team Philippines sa Puerto Azul: Making Waves for the Gold."

Philippine Sports Commission chair William Ramirez said flag-waving well-wishers in the historic province will greet Team Philippines as they parade from the Provincial Capitol in Trece Martirez City to Puerto Azul.

"We're having team buildings with the athletes as our way of pumping them up for the big task ahead—the SEA Games," said Ramirez. "At the same time, the Puerto Azul team-building is meant to create awareness on our SEA Games hosting among the people of Cavite."

"In behalf of the people of Cavite, I warmly welcome Team Philippines to our province and we are all proud to be a part of the team-building activity which will boost the morale of the national athletes come the SEA Games," Maliksi said.

Maliksi, Ramirez, Puerto Azul general manager Hugh Campbell, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr. will give inspirational speeches to the athletes in the daylong gig aimed at fostering camaraderie among mainstays of the national squad.

Today's activity, Ramirez said, gives the athletes a chance to breathe fresh air outside their training camps. Here, they get to trade their jerseys with beach shorts and play fun games with their peers from other events.

PSC Commissioner Jose Mundo, Ricard Garcia, Ambrosio de Luna and Leon Montemayor will also be on hand to relay their support to the national team during the affair to be capped by a beach barbeque party.

Sports broadcast on the rise

SPORTS COVERAGE IS ONE AREA WHERE ABS-CBN continues to make great inroads.

Starting out 2005 with the overlapping coverage of the Philippine Basketball League's Open Championship and the Asian Formula 3, ABS-CBN Sports went on to cover the Girls Athletic League cheering contest and the Asian Karting Open Championship.

With the opening of the college basketball season, the University Athletic Association of the Philippines and the National Collegiate Athletic Association returned to ABS-CBN Sports' home channel, Studio 23. Both leagues' cheerdance competitions and the UAAP-NCAA All-Star Games for Bantay Bata 163 were also covered.

Among the organization's coming programs for the year's final quarter are the last conference of the PBL on Oct. 29, the 2005 Yonex-Sunrise Philippines National Open Badminton Championships on Oct. 30, the World Poker Tour, another leg of the AF3 and karting, and this year's Star Olympics.

ABS-CBN is also the exclusive partner of the Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition.

While ABS-CBN's sports portfolio increased in variety, the organization's achievements in the UAAP and NCAA remain the most rewarding in the past five years.

Under the watch of ABS-CBN Sports, the UAAP has reached an unprecedented volume of viewers and media exposure. The NCAA, on the other hand, has recovered its grandeur through effective branding and imaging strategies.

No wonder, ABS-CBN has won the Catholic Mass Media Awards for sports the past two years for its UAAP games and cheerdance coverage. This year, ABS-CBN Sports is again a finalist for the same awards this year.

Bacchus five forges semis tiff vs Taguig

FIFTH SEED BACCHUS/HARBOUR-CENTRE BEAT BOY BAWANG-BACKED Parañaque anew, 81-75, Thursday to advance to the Northern Conference semifinals in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national basketball championship at the San Dionisio gym in Parañaque City.

Slotman Kenneth Coyukang broke out of a long slump to propel Bacchus/Harbour to victory with 16 points, 13 rebounds, two steals, two blocks and one assist.

With its two-game sweep of the Jets, Bacchus/Harbour earned a shot at defending Northern Conference champion Forward Taguig in the semis.

Bacchus/Harbour led by 21 points, 67-46 at the start of the fourth quarter, but the Jets fought back to within four, 75-79, in the final 17 seconds on back-to-back triples by Elvis Tolentino.

That proved to be the Jets' last big stand.

The Jets of Vice Mayor Anjo Yllana was hurt by the expulsion of Randy Lopez midway in the contest.

"We were at our best in the second and third quarters, but we nearly collapsed in the end," said Bacchus/Harbour coach Lawrence Cheongson. "The resilience of my players was the key."

Bacchus/Harbour and Taguig clash today at the start of their best-of-three series in the tourney supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Sunbolt Sports Drink, Accel, Molten, Nature's Spring, Far Eastern Insurance, Skygo, Sirlitz, Hapee Toothpaste, Dewfoam, KSK Food Products, Bayview Park Hotel and Holiday Plaza-Cebu.

EPONDULAN: Bacchus' stalwart

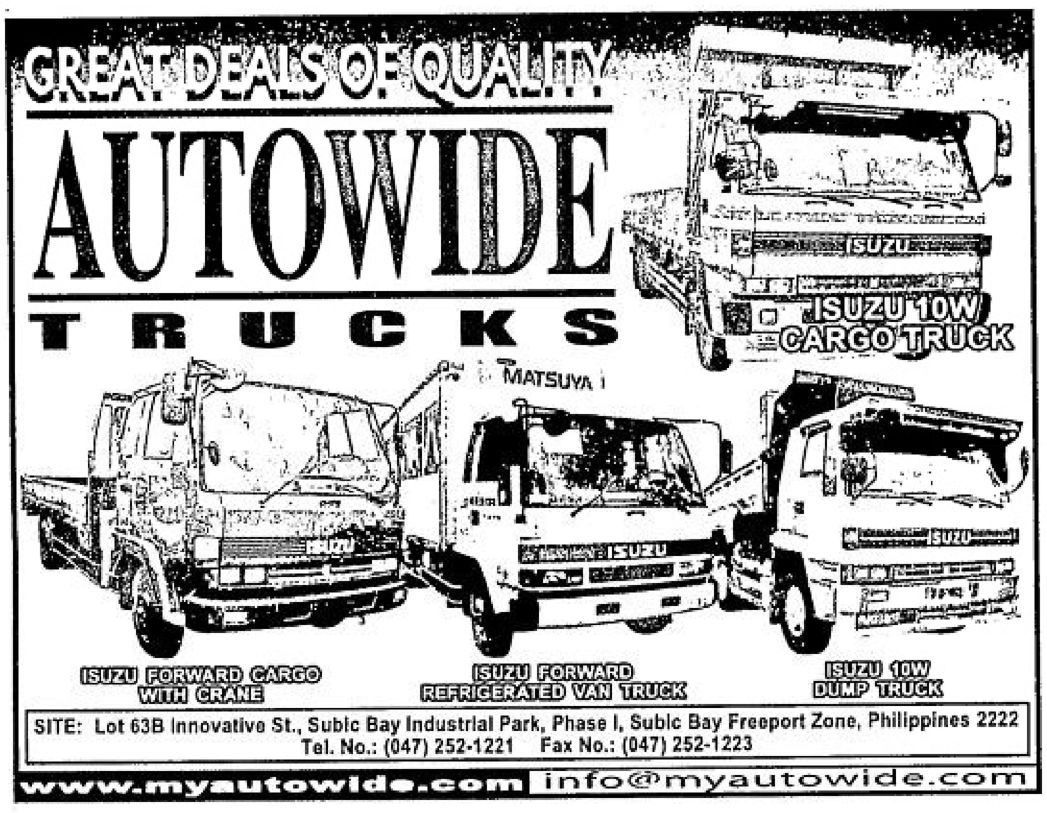
The scores:

BACCHUS/HARBOUR 81—Coyukang 16, Epondulan 15, Cordero 10, Rauschmayer 10, Sta. Cruz 9, Hardin 6, Chua 4, Reroma 4, Hudencial 4, Pile 2, Gamboa 0, Enrile 0.

PARAÑAQUE 75—Rodriguez 28, Marquez 21, Tolentino 9, Bognot 6, Yambao 4, Ruiz 4, Guiyab 2, Lopez 1, Buendia 0, Ollano 0.

Quarters: 15-16, 40-30, 67-49, 81-75

BRITISH CUP: British Ambassador to the Philippines Peter Beckingham (left) awards the winner's trophy to horse owner Paolo Mendoza (right) following the victory of his horse Don Paolo in the 2nd British Cup held at the Sta. Ana Park. With them is PRCI president and CEO Solomon Cua.



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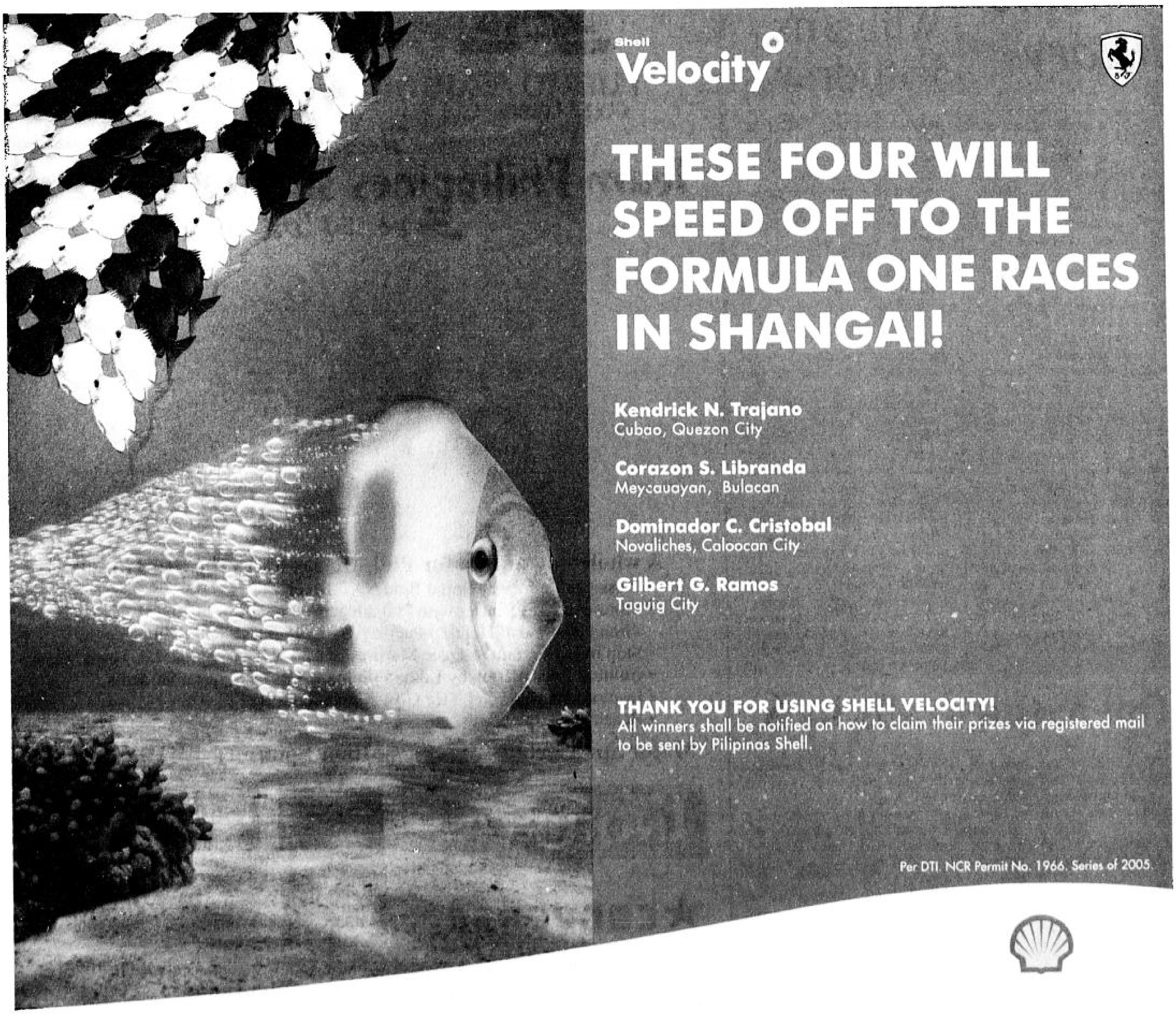

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Celebrities eye Disney in Acropolis badminton

THE COUNTRY'S biggest names in the entertainment industry battle for tickets to Hong Kong Disneyland when the Celebrity Badminton Tournament of Sta. Lucia Realty and Development blasts off today at the Acropolis Mandaluyong, the real estate giant's latest project.

The tournament coincides with the launch of the Acropolis and already confirmed to participate are celebrities Janno Gibbs, Bing Loyzaga, Anjo Yllana, Amy Perez, Ian Veneracion, Angelu de Leon, Ricky Davao, Lotlot de Leon, Emilio Garcia, Rachel Lobangco, Dingdong Avanzado and Daisy Reyes.

Acropolis Mandaluyong is designed as a modern and exclusive community comprising 113 residential lots and 20 commercial lots on Calle JP Rizal.

It has already generated keen interest among buyers looking to invest in a secure and convenient location for their home or business.

Besides its proximity to the Makati and Ortigas business districts, Acropolis Mandaluyong offers easy access to various commercial areas and educational establishments nearby.

E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph
Editor **Nestor U. Torre**
Assistant Editor **Rito P. Asilo**

SATURDAY *Special*

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DE ROSSI. Textured performance.

CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Alessandra de Rossi stands out in lackluster Singaporean thriller

By Rito P. Asilo

ALESSANDRA DE Rossi lends her thespic sensibility to Kelvin Tong's glossy but derivative thriller, "The Maid," a full-length Singaporean fright flick that features De Rossi as a Filipino domestic helper who's driven by poverty and ambition to try her luck in the Lion City.

For 18-year-old Rosa Dimaano (De Rossi), the experience of working in the progressive city-state is a dream come true—the fulfillment of a life-long wish to "see the world," to escape the harsh realities of life back home, and to raise money for her ailing seven-year-old brother, Bayani.

Chinese opera troupe

Indeed, everything appears peachy upon Rosa's arrival in Singapore: Her employers, Mr. and Mrs Teo (Chen Shu Cheng and Hong Hui Fang, respectively), who run a Chinese opera troupe, are kind and generous albeit curiously cautious—and she gets along very well with their mentally-handicapped son, Ah Soon.

She doesn't even get spooked when the genial but superstitious couple warns that her arrival in the city-state marks the first day of the Chinese lunar calendar's Seventh Month, also known as the Hungry Ghost Festival, when the gates of hell open, and allow disturbed, forsaken spirits from the netherworld to wander among the living for 30 days.

To maintain peace and harmony between the living and the dead, some rules have to be observed: Children must be home by 5 p.m.; don't do your laundry after midnight; if someone calls your name after dark, you shouldn't look back; keep the first row of theater seats vacant for the dead—or else!

The Teos themselves have set strange, stringent rules for Rosa: She's not allowed to post her own

ALESSANDRA/ A2-2

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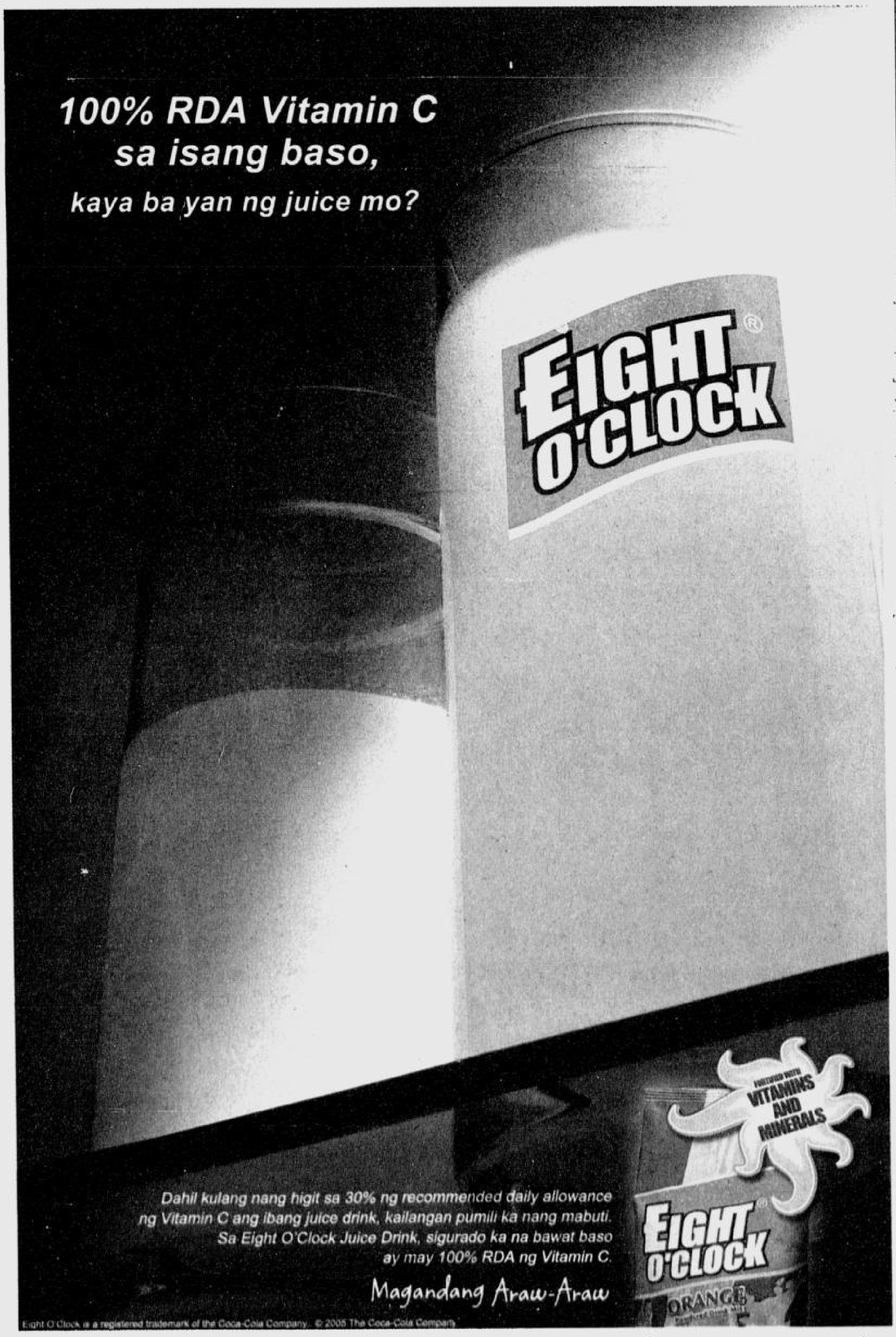

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Zeta-Jones, Alba re

"THE LEGEND OF ZORRO." Reunites Catherine Zeta-Jones (right) with Antonio Banderas.

By Nestor U. Torre

"THE MASK OF ZORRO" WAS A landmark movie for Catherine Zeta-Jones, because her sultry and feisty performance in it snatched her from relative obscurity and made her an international star.

This year, Zeta-Jones harks back to that early success and adds to it with the swashbuckling film's equally exciting sequel, "The Legend of Zorro," which reunites her with co-star Antonio Banderas and director Martin Campbell.

Conclusion

"Legend" is set several years after the conclusion of the previous adventure. Alejandro (Banderas) and Elena (Zeta-Jones) are married and have a 10-year-old son, Joaquin (Adrian Alonso).

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Pauline Wilson graces Merk's anniversary shows

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

HAWAIIAN-BORN JAZZ singer Pauline Wilson will headline the third anniversary of Merk's Bar Bistro on Sept. 27, 28 and 30 at the Ayala Food and Entertainment Center, Ayala Center, Cebu. Richard Merk joins Pauline, Toti Fuentes and Anna Fegi in the show.

Pauline's father inspired her to explore her love for singing. Initially, she wanted to become a social worker, but the singing gigs kept coming, so she had to drop out of school and pursue a singing career full-time.

Repertoire

Musicians Jerry Hey, Larry Williams and Bob Wilson discovered the budding singer.

As Seawind, they gained a huge following. When the group disbanded, Pauline dabbled in TV and film soundtrack recordings, and radio commercials.

She has collaborated with Celine Dion, Brenda Russell, Bruce Hornsby, Kevyn Lattau, the Crusaders, and the Yellowjackets. Pauline is the only artist from Hawaii to win a Grammy Award.

Yutaka tapped her to perform in his highly-acclaimed albums, "Yutaka" and "Brazasia." Her classic album, "Intuition," spawned the hit singles, "Stay" and "Follow Your Road." "Tribute" is her latest album.

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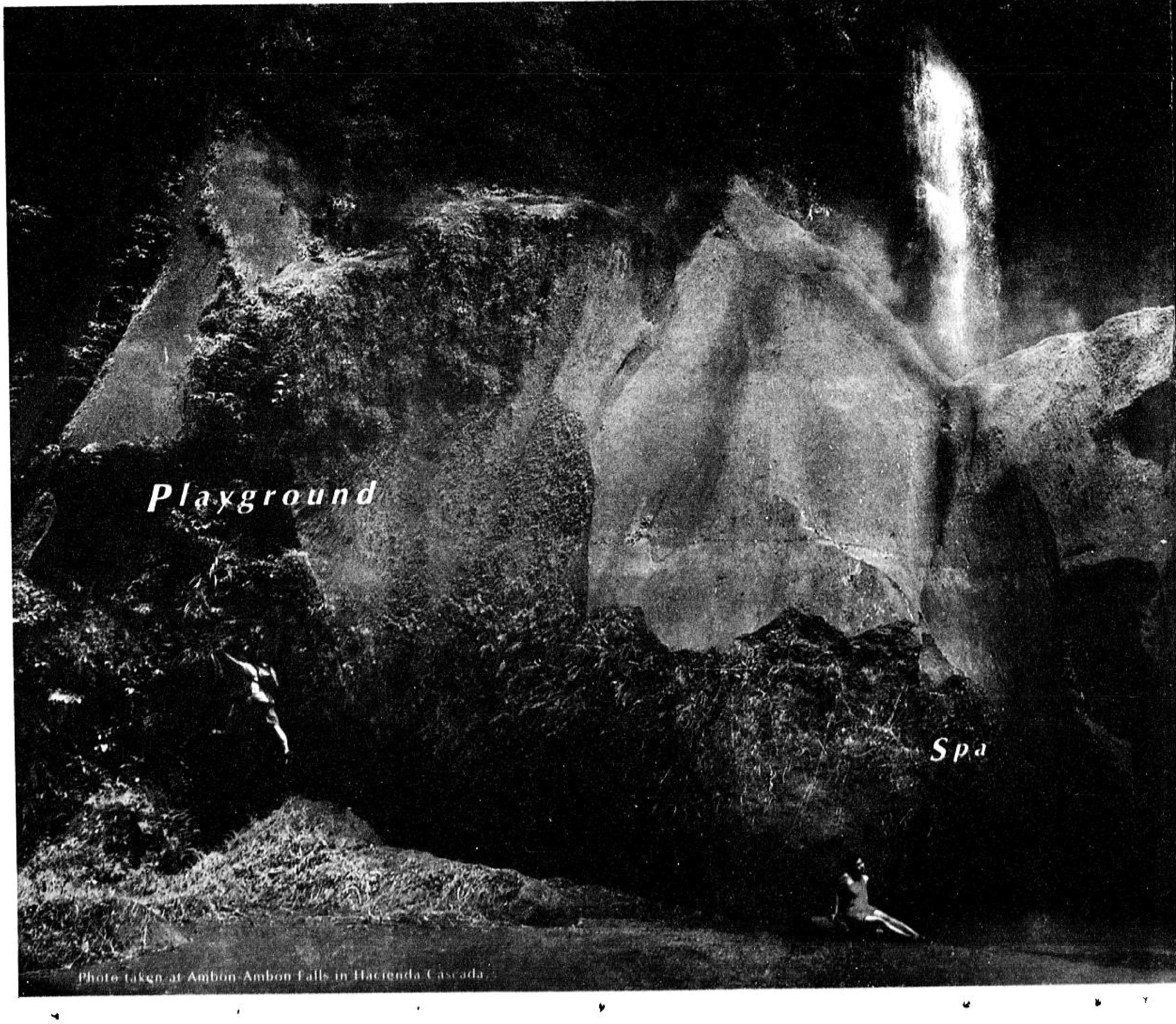
WILSON. From social work to performing arts.



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turn to action genre

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art, Jessica Alba re successes that her own stellar ca- is year, she heated up the screen as the sultry female lead in "Sin City."

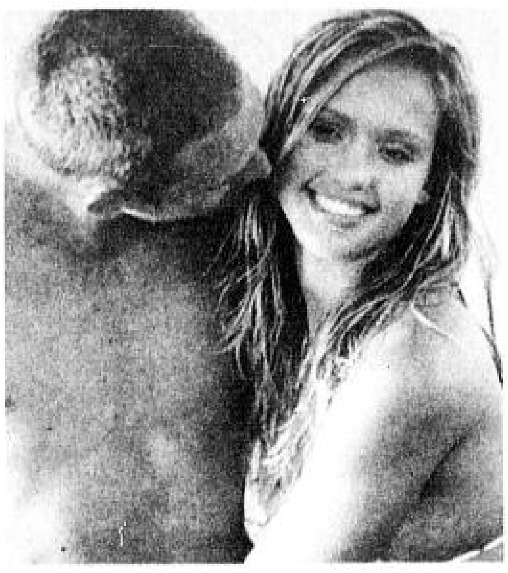
She followed up with "Fantastic Four," where she played Invisible Girl with flair. The film was so popular with viewers that Alba has signed on for two sequels!

Shark wrangler

Next, she stars opposite Paul Walker in the action movie, "Into the Blue," where she plays a shark wrangler.

What's up next for her? She's been tapped for some hot projects, including a cool thriller, "The Eye," to be produced by Tom Cruise's company.

This lead to rumors of a romance between her and Cruise, but Alba swears it's all strictly business. She has a boyfriend, he has Katie Holmes—and that's that!



"INTO THE BLUE." Paul Walker (left) and Jessica Alba topbill John Stockwell's adventure flick.

Alessandra de Rossi . . .

From page A2-1

letters; mirrors are prohibited inside the household, etc. Rosa—who, curiously, is never seen doing chores—has ample time to poke her nose where it doesn't belong.

She soon stumbles onto the personal belongings of Esther Santos, the Teos' last maid, who allegedly went missing two years earlier. Without qualms, she then slips into Esther's clothes, and slowly unravels the family's deep, dark secrets, and its murderous past.

Meanwhile, the creepy shadows that lurk in the house's dark nooks and crannies, and the pale-blue creatures who keep staring at Rosa and Ah Soon start to get *really* antsy—and they're obviously *not* pleased to have an *'Ama Namin'*-chanting *Pinay* shaking their skeletons in the closet (pun intended).

Facial features

Alessandra, aided by her beautiful, expressive facial features, comes up with a textured performance that smolders with telling nuances and restraint, and shines despite the movie's shock tactics and scary-film bravado.

DE ROSSI. Her film is a big hit in Singapore.

For once, it's refreshing to see an actress in a horror film who doesn't belabor her tonsils—and the audience's eardrums—with hyena-like howls and shrieks. And we're pleased to learn that the movie has become a box-office hit in Singapore.

Kelvin Tong, who co-directed the exhilarating 1999 Singapore filmfest-winning "Eating Air," sets the right tone—glossy, uncanny and mysterious—by establishing an eerie atmosphere that is greatly enhanced by fine technical support and first-rate production values.

Devastating premise

Unfortunately, the director merely glosses over a potentially devastating premise (a naive domestic helper in a strange, foreign land), and underutilizes his characters' angst and melancholy, which would have added texture and human dimension to his cold, confounding chiller.

Tong fails to go beyond mood and tone. Suspense-thrillers and horror flicks are most effective when they tap into their audience's real-life concerns and subliminal fears (like "M. Night Shyamalan's "Signs" or Alejandro Amenabar's "The Others").

"The Maid" vacillates between unrestrained gloom and derivative gimmickry—a middling follow-up to a dynamic first cinematic venture.

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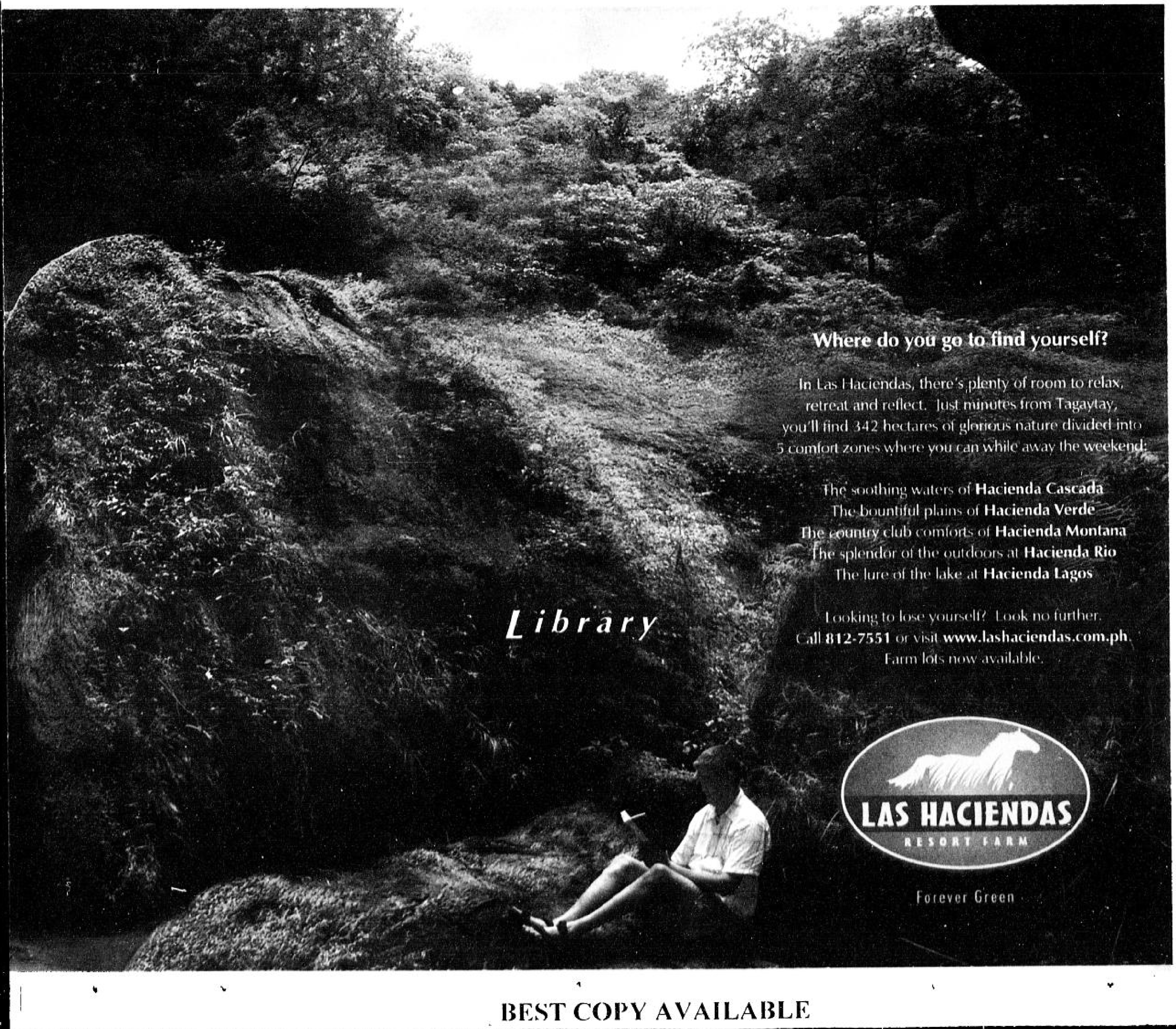

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Sweet, rosy sentiments in 'Voices of Love'

BUBLÉ. His rendition of "Kissing A Fool" has become ubiquitous on the airwaves.

By Noelani Torre

YOU CAN HARDLY go wrong with a love song collection. Most songs have love as their subject matter, and there are varying treatments to this universal theme.

Compilation

"Voices of Love," as its title indicates, is one such compilation. Featuring "the most romantic songs from the most beautiful voices today," this 18-track CD is simply overflowing with sweet and rosy sentiments.

The collection's opener will doubtless be familiar to everybody. Grammy winner Norah Jones' hit song, "Don't Know Why," has been on the air for a couple of years now, and its jazzy feel and soft piano accompaniment sets the tone for the rest of the album.

There's a lot of jazz here—or jazz-pop, purists would argue—and a good number of young crooners like Jones. Canadian Michael Bublé is another singer whose rendition of George Michael's "Kissing A Fool" has been equally ubiquitous on the airwaves.

Unlike the after-dinner-cocktails-at-the-lounge atmosphere of "Don't Know Why," however, this more upbeat song is redolent with the nostalgia-inducing feel of the big-band era.

King of white-boy soul George Michael makes an appearance with "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," taken from his 2004 album, "Songs From the Last Century."

The rhythm slows down with the next songs on the playlist—Diana Krall's husky and sultry interpretation of the Burt Bacharach classic, "The Look of Love," and the Nat King Cole and Natalie Cole duet, "Unforgettable."

Trio

Following the Cole duo's slower-than-slow number are offerings from a trio of up-and-comers: Renée Olstead, Joss Stone, and Jamie Cullum. Texan teenager Olstead tries—and fails—to wow us with her attempt at a mature performance of David Foster and Linda Thompson's "A Love That Will Last."

Maturity and depth are not lacking in Stone's more impressive "Fell In Love With A Boy," however, and twentysomething Brit Cullum gives us a faithful re-rendering of the sorrowful Radiohead original, "High and Dry."

The inclusion of the last in the lineup is somewhat surprising—it doesn't seem right to classify "High and Dry" as a love song. It does fit in sound-wise, but its rather abstruse lyrics appear to be exploring existential themes and not romance.

Aside from the Coles, there's one other male-female (and cross-generational) duet in the album. Unlikely duo Tony Bennett and k.d. lang charm us with their interpretation of the old-time favorite, "Dream A Little Dream of Me."

As expected, there's something from the ultra-hyped Josh Groban, as well. He performs Linda Thompson and Richard Marx's sentimental "To Where You Are." This is back-to-back with Russel Watson's rendition of the Simon & Garfunkel classic, "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

Playlist

The rest of the playlist is made up of performances by female artists, young and old: Eva Cassidy does Cindy Lauper's "Time After Time," Keri Noble sings her own "Talk to Me," Stacey Kent does "What the World Needs Now is Love," Alison Moyet performs "That Ole Devil Called Love," the Holly Cole Trio sings "I Can See Clearly Now," and Lisa Ono closes the listing with the French ditty, "La Vie En Rose."

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GMAFILMS

NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK!

Pet show branches out into two new TV programs

By Ronald G. Mangubat

"ANIMAL X," THE one-hour weekLy pet show produced by Visivo productions and aired over ABC 5, has entertained animal lovers for two years now. With its steady following, it could have sustained what it has started and remained loyal to its format.

But, members of its executive and production team thought of branching out into new programs to achieve stronger focus on animals and pets.

"One of the things we realized is that 'Animal X' had other elements aside from pets," admits Adrian Concepcion, president of Visivo Productions. "We had segments on lifestyle, travel and cockfighting."

Components

But, instead of deleting the travel and cockfighting components of the show, Concepcion decided to create two TV programs based on the Filipinos' sense of wanderlust and penchant for cockfighting. That was when "2DMAXXX" and "Pilipinas Sabong Sports" were born.

"2DMAXXX," the latest travel show on Philippine TV, used to be a mere segment of "Animal X"—which was then called "Doon Po Sa Atin." Now, it has been reformatted into a 30-minute magazine program that will start airing on Aug. 27 at 11:30 a.m. over ABC 5.

"It's going to be a fun show that will cater to the youth—those whose zest for adventure and energy are boundless," explains Royce Ambrocio, one of the writers of the show.

Exciting spots

His co-writer, Thea Lyn Cordero, adds: "It's fast-paced, MTVish, and has a reality-TV feel. Our hosts, Wendy Valdes, Ms Tourism 2005, and model Jenny Manuel, take viewers to exciting spots in and out of Metro Manila—like the forest trails of Subic, the beaches of Bicol, recreation sites of Laguna, etc."

Ambrocio and Cordero further explain that, unlike other travel programs, "2DMAXXX" will veer away from serious academic discussions about the history of places.

In fact, it will have minimal voice-over narration, and will rely on the hosts' candid impressions about the places they will be visiting. "Our hosts will hike, camp out and discover things on their own," Cordero shares.

Magazine format

On the other hand, "Pilipinas Sabong Sports" has beauty queen-turned-actress Daisy Reyes as host. Aired on IBC Channel 13, the program has a magazine format and has Reyes visiting fighting-cock farms all over the country.

According to Carla Enriquez, writer/researcher of the show, one of the program's objectives is to erase the misconception that cockfighting is all about gambling. "We want to show the lighter side of cockfighting. We want to promote it as a sport."

SATURDAY *Special*

NOW SHOWING

Power and restraint in must-see films

By Rito P. Asilo

"The Constant Gardener"
D: Fernando Meirelles
S: Ralph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz

TWO OF HOLLYWOOD'S most exciting recruits from World Cinema, Fernando Meirelles ("City of God") and Walter Salles ("The Motorcycle Diaries," "Central Station," "Behind the Sun") are showcased in highly polished, seminal features this week.

For viewers who think that hysterical acting is the *only* effective way to show grief, guilt and other strong emotions, we suggest that you stay away from "The Constant Gardener" and "Dark Water." But, if you like good films that don't insult viewers' intelligence, join the queue.

In Meirelles' gut-wrenching big-screen adaptation of John le Carre's gripping novel, Justin Quayle (Ralph Fiennes), a British diplomat assigned to Kenya, investigates the unexplained, violent murder of his pregnant activist-wife, Tessa (Rachel Weisz). The couple may be as different as fire and ice, but they fiercely and passionately love each other—or, do they?

Soon after Justin accidentally unearths secret documents and incriminating letters among his wife's personal belongings, grief and mourning turn to confusion and fear when he uncovers an intricate web of conspiracy involving the testing and distribution of anti-TB

POWER/ A3-2

FIENNES. Cuts a dashing tragic-romantic figure.

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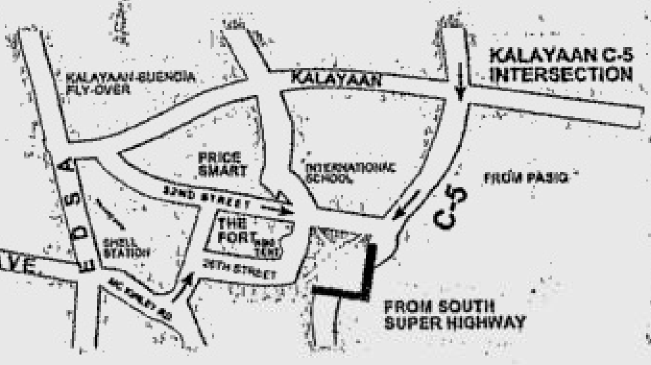

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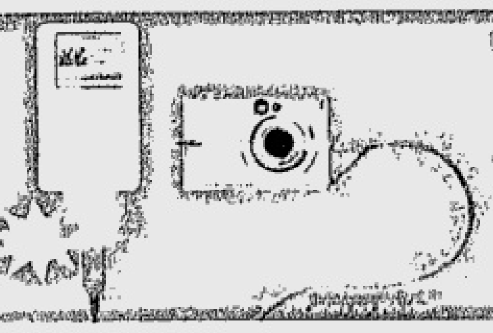

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Power and restraint in must-see films

GADE AND CONNELLY. Play daughter and mother in Walter Salles' remake of the Japanese hit thriller.

From page A3-1

drugs among destitute patients in the HIV-stricken country. Moreover, the documents' disturbing content puts into question his wife's fidelity, as well as their love for each other.

Fiennes elicits our empathy as he deftly demonstrates the power of restraint to vivify his character's bottled-up grief and suffering. But, the understated performances of the versatile Weisz and Fiennes, who cuts a dashing tragic-romantic figure even when he's disheveled, aren't the film's only strong points: Meirelles utilizes the majestic but harsh Kenyan landscape as a backdrop to the harsh social realities of the African continent.

The director deftly paints an awesome visual paradox—through local color, indigenous music and sounds—between the aching beauty of the Kenyan countryside amidst political anarchy, and its unbelievable human misery.

Indeed, justice and love may be fleeting in this material world, but elsewhere, on a higher dimension, they're unconditional and unbending.

When a character states, matter-of-factly: "In Africa, life is bought so cheaply. Here, there are no murders—only regrettable deaths," you're left gasping for breath!

"Dark Water"

D: Walter Salles
S: Jennifer Connelly, Dougray Scott

In his first English-language film, Walter Salles delivers a brooding but highly engaging psychological thriller that doubles as a family drama *and* a horror film—about Dahlia Williams (Jennifer Connelly), a mother who makes the ultimate act of sacrifice for her daughter, Ceci (Ariel Gade).

After a messy divorce from her better-employed ex-husband, Kyle (Dougray Scott), Dahlia and her daughter settle into a spooky and decrepit apartment complex—the only one she can afford.

Unfortunately, the less-than-friendly estrangement with her ex-hubby soon turns into a bitter child-custody battle, and the desperate Dahlia has to prove that she's better fit to take care of her child!

The beleaguered mother's troubles don't end there: She and her daughter are then sucked into the apartment's horrifying secrets—she has to unravel its deadly past to thwart the evil presence that threatens their lives. But, the resilient mom isn't known to back away from life's puzzling and spirit-breaking challenges—demonic or otherwise.

If you haven't seen Hideo Nakata's 2002 Japanese original, Salles' Hollywood remake will unnerve and entertain you. From the building's dank halls and the creepy elevator to the stained, damp ceiling, the place wreaks of malevolence and grave danger.

However, if you have seen the award-winning original, Salles' deft personal touch can still be a beguiling viewing experience. And, it helps that Connelly is tasked to play the emotionally-scarred heroine—a role that she has mastered in films like "The House of Sand and Fog," "Pollock," "Requiem for a Dream" and "A Beautiful Mind."

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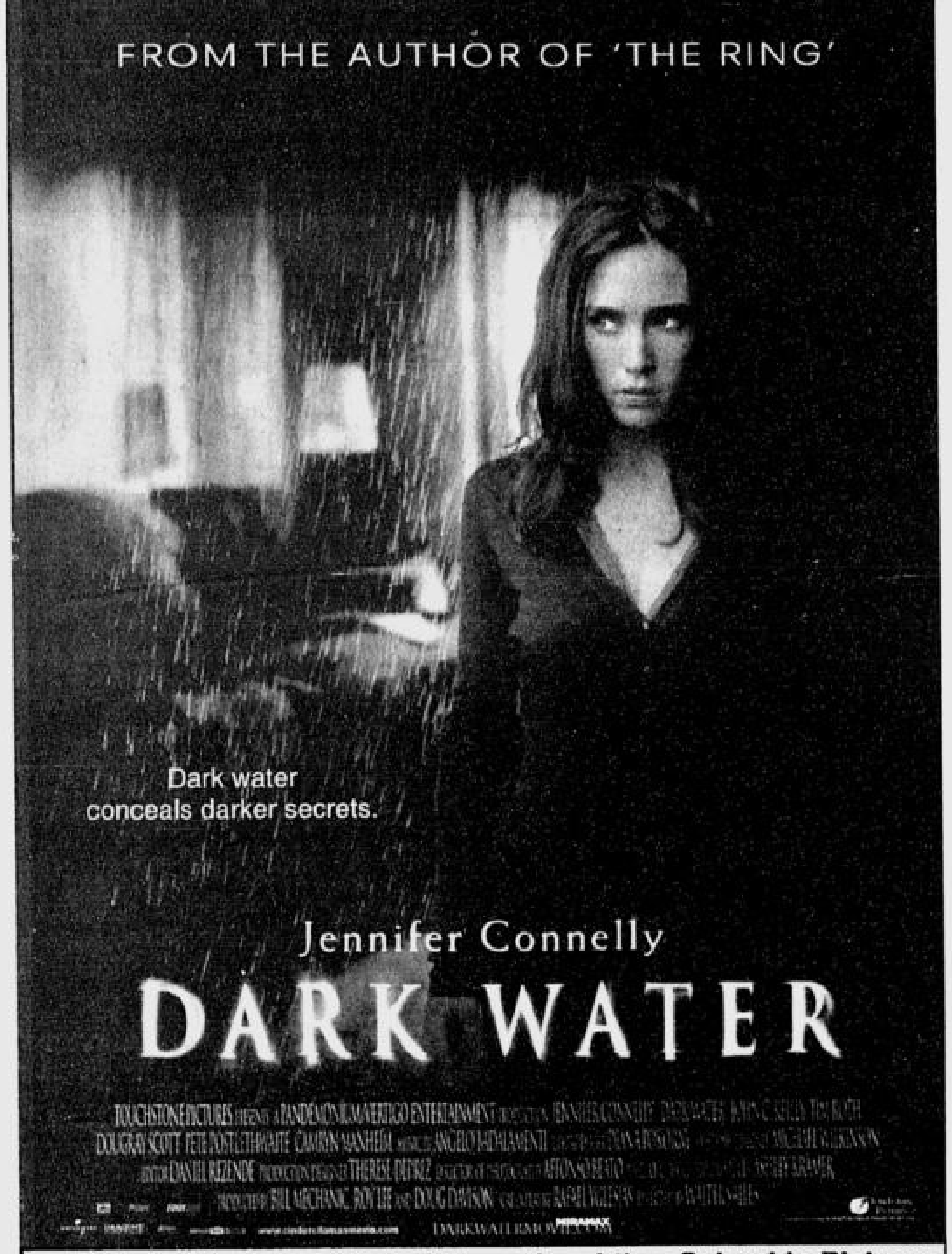

FROM THE AUTHOR OF 'THE RING'
Dark water conceals darker secrets.
Jennifer Connelly
DARK WATER

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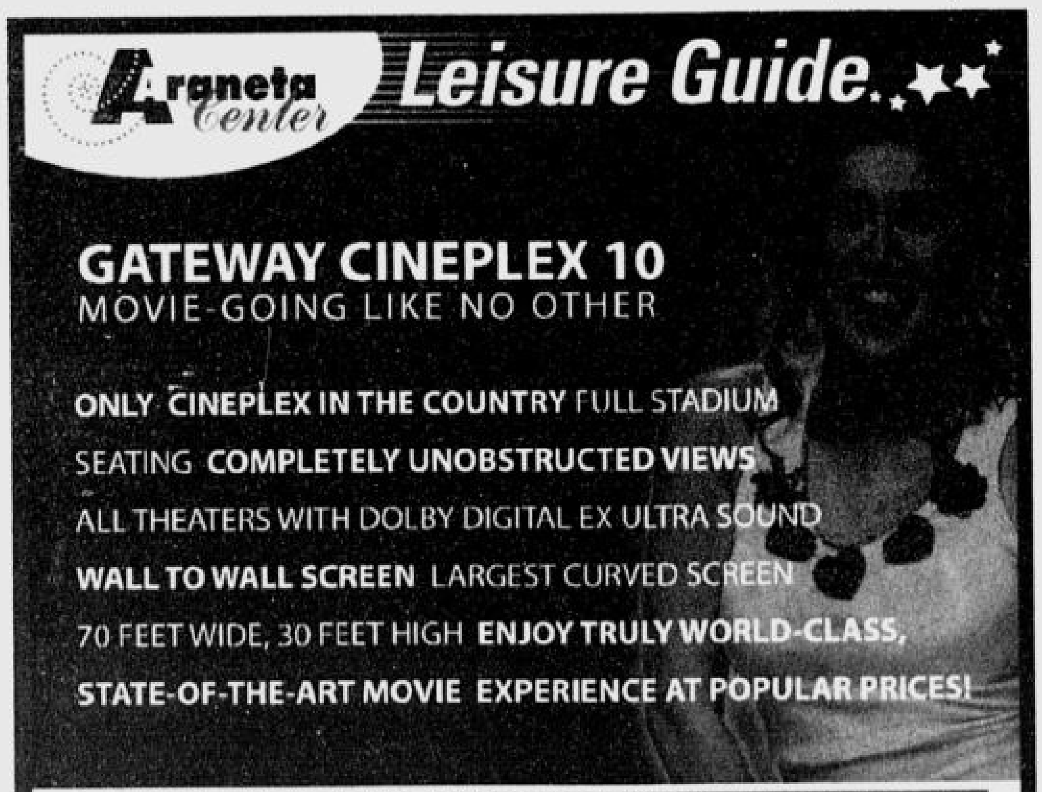

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'Ilusyon's' 'A' boosts digital filmmaking

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST WEEK, THE DIGITAL FILM, "Ilusyon," got the top grade of "A" from the Cinema Evaluation Board, entitling it to 100-percent rebate on amusement taxes when it's shown on the commercial theater circuit.

The "A" that "Ilusyon" got has heartened makers of digital films, some of whom thought that the CEB favored mainstream movies. Not true: The board seeks to recognize, encourage and reward quality movies—whether 35 mm or digital.

Fine showing

It's likely that "Ilusyon's" fine showing at the CEB will encourage other new filmmakers to shoot digital features, which will enliven and energize the languishing local film scene.

We hear that "Ilusyon" will be entered in the Cinemanila filmfest next month, so you can catch it there and see for yourself why the CEB gave it its highest grade.

PARKER. A revelation in Paolo Villaluna and Ellen Ramos' movie.

The film stars Yul Servo and Jaycee Parker

("Ilusyon" is only the second film to get an "A" from the CEB this year, after "La Visa Loca.")

Another heartening development on the digital film scene this month is the screening at the Promenade in Greenhills of seven of the nine features produced for the Cinemalaya Alternative Film Festival some months ago.

This move-over screening will enable film buffs who missed the Cinemalaya movies' CCP and UP screenings to finally catch them at the new and posh Promenade Cineplex.

Only five of the Cinemalaya films are being shown starting Sept. 28. Two of them may be distributed later by a major film company.

Screening schedule

Led by best film winner, "Pepot Artista," by Doy del Mundo, the Cinemalaya films will have this screening schedule:

Sept. 28, 12 noon, short films: "Alimuom," "Babae," "Blood Bank," "Kultado," "Panaginipan," and best short narrative winner, "Mansyon." 2:45 p.m., "Pepot Artista." 5 p.m., "ICU Bed #7" by Rica Arevalo. 7:30 p.m., "Room Boy" by Aloysius Adlawan. 10:15 p.m., "Sarong Banggi" by Emmanuel dela Cruz.

Sept. 29, 2:45 p.m., "Room Boy." 5 p.m., "Sarong Banggi." 10:15 p.m., "Isnats" by Michael Angelo Dagñalan.

Sept. 30, 12 noon, "Pepot Artista." 2:45 p.m., "ICU Bed #7." 7:30 p.m., short films. 10:15 p.m., "Room Boy."

Oct. 1, 12 noon, short films. 2:45 p.m., "Isnats." 5 p.m., "Pepot Artista." 7:30 p.m., "ICU Bed #7."

Oct. 2, 12 noon, short films. 2:45 p.m., "Pepot Artista." 5 p.m., "Room Boy." 7:30 p.m., "Sarong Banggi."

Oct. 3, 12 noon, "Room Boy." 5 p.m., "Isnats." 10:15 p.m., "ICU Bed #7."

Oct. 4, 12 noon, "ICU Bed #7." 2:45 p.m., "Sarong Banggi." 7:30 p.m., "Isnats." 10:15 p.m., "Pepot Artista."

Do patronize these films! Call 722-4496.

Fil-Am quartet makes waves in the US

By Jocelyn Valle

"MUSIC IS A KEY POINT FOR Filipinos in the US," notes Andrey Silva of the San Francisco, California pop quartet, 6th Day. "In fact, everybody we know owns a Magic mike at home," adds his bandmate, Errol Viray, referring to the gadget cherished by videoke-obsessed Pinoys.

Raves

Two other members, Cyrus Mallare and Jose Penala, observe that every other Fil-Am youth has a band. In fact, they all belonged to different groups, including Kai, which is arguably the most successful Fil-Am musical group in the US, before they formed 6th Day in 2001, and earned raves in a gig in New York just six days after.

They got offers from several labels, but chose E Real Records, which recently released their debut album, "Forever Starts Today."

Though the guys dig a variety of music types and styles, they admit to having a soft spot for OPM. "I grew up listening to my father singing the songs of Freddie Aguilar and Rico J. Puno," Errol recalls with fondness. "It really got me into music. My influences include Ogie Alcasid."

They are also blown away by the talent of their *kababayan*, whom they see on TV through ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel and on concert tours. "We saw Lani Misalucha once in Chicago. She's awesome," they gush in unison. "Ryan Cayabyab is also great. We got to work with him just before we came here."

Bids

They also supported fellow Fil-Ams Jasmine Trias and Camille Velasco's bids to become the American Idol last year.

They are likewise proud of Black Eyed Peas member Apl, who hails from Pampanga. "Did you know that his *Tagalog* song, 'Bebot,' is getting a lot of airplay in the US?," Andrey asks.

Margaret O'Brien, movie tyke of the '40s

By Behn Cervantes

WHEN I STARTED WATCHING MOVIES, Shirley Temple was merely a cinematic doll for me. Of course, I knew who she was, but it wasn't until later that I saw her films. Indeed, I was impressed by the cute, curly blonde with the petulant smile.

The child star of my time was really a dark-haired moppet with a penchant for weeping. If Shirley was the epitome of cute, Margaret O'Brien possessed a tragic quality, for which reason her films often had scenes where she would quietly weep, thus she gained the audience's sympathy.

Special Oscar

In fact, she was so effective that she was awarded a special Oscar. The MGM child star was considered by many as the best child actress of her day. In "Meet Me in St. Louis," for example, she stole scenes from the legendary Judy Garland!

Margaret was born Angela Maxime O'Brien on Jan. 15, 1937. The charming young girl made her first film at age four in "Babes on Broadway." O'Brien was cast in musicals and dramas, although she was most appreciated for her dramatic prowess. She had the cute-girl qualities of Temple *and* the dramatic depth of Greta Garbo.

In "Little Women," she was pitted against June Allyson, Elizabeth Taylor and Janet Leigh, with Mary Astor portraying their quietly suffering mother. As expected, Margaret stole many scenes.

However, she did not succeed in her bid to mature into young-adult roles. Although she acted in films as an adolescent, she did not make the smooth transition as Taylor did. Like many child stars, she didn't grow tall enough—she stood below five feet!

Predictable

In the '50s, she starred in predictable teeny-bopper films like "Her First Romance" and "Glory." Incidentally, she came to the Philippines as representative of the American Girl Scouts. In 1960, she was cast in "Pink Heller," starring Sophia Loren, and then shot "Annabelle Lee" in Peru in 1972. Her last film was "Amy" in 1981.

Of course, she remained active on television and in the dinner-theater circuit. She is remembered alongside Garland, Gene Kelly, Joan Fontaine, Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon. But, her adult colleagues remember her as "the best little thespian ever to adorn the screen!"

O'BRIEN. Stole scenes from Judy Garland in "Meet Me in St. Louis."

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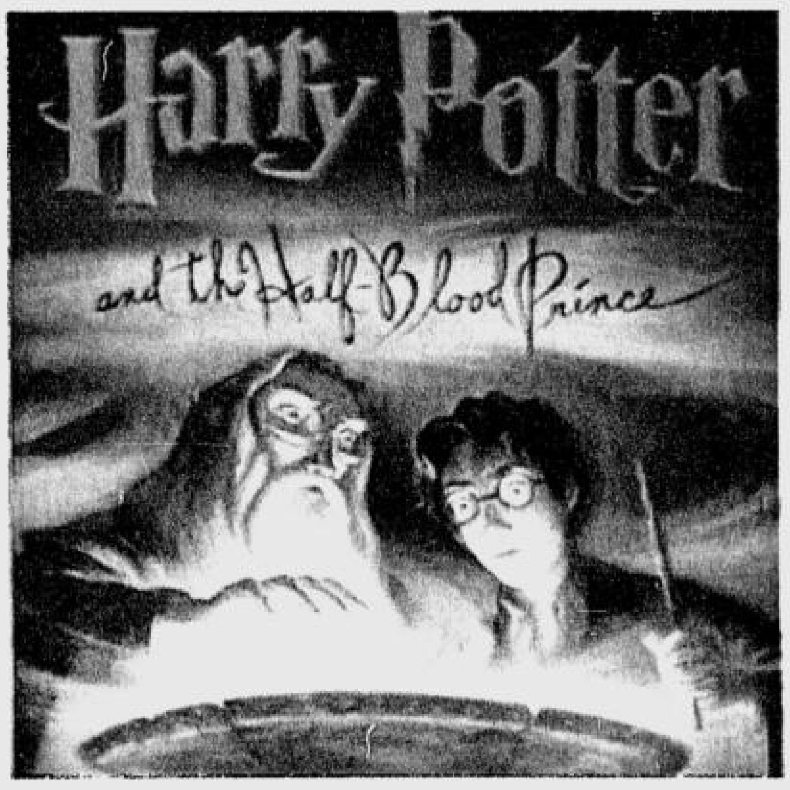


J.K. ROWLING'S sixth book in the popular children's series is dark and tragic.

Feeling of doom permeates 'Half-Blood Prince'

By Noelani Torre

TO THOSE FEW OUT THERE WHO HAVE yet to read "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," fear not: This review contains no spoilers. Not much, anyway. In any case, the fact that this book would be the series' darkest yet (and that Somebody Important Will Die) had been made known to the public months before printing even began.

The sixth and penultimate book in J.K. Rowling's hugely popular Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" is dark, indeed, and at the end, even tragic. There is a passage right near the end that indicates the new—and concluding—direction the series has taken ever since the first significant death occurred in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire."

Realization

Here, Harry comes to the realization that "he must abandon forever the illusion he ought to have lost at the age of one: That the shelter of a parent's arms meant that nothing could hurt him. There was no waking from his nightmare, no comforting whisper in the dark that he was safe really, that it was all his imagination…"

That may sound stark, but then, so is the situation. It has been so from the very beginning, in fact. If you remember, the first book, "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," told us how Harry's parents were murdered by the greatest dark wizard in the history of magic, who had tried—and failed—to kill the then one-year-old Harry.

Lighthearted

The first three books, however, were largely lighthearted and characterized by Rowling's deft comedic style. The fun is still present in "Half-Blood Prince," but there's a feeling of doom just waiting 'round the corner.

It's not an oppressive feeling, however—more like the deep breath taken before the plunge. It's also about the often painful process of growing up. It may come as a surprise to those who still see Harry and friends as kids, but they're already 16 and 17 years old in Book Six—and Rowling doesn't forget to include their hormones and (in hints) their angst!

Connection

This connection to reality is evident in other aspects, as well. The book, for one, begins in the office of the Muggle Prime Minister, who is beset with problems that have spilled over from the magical world. The Ministry of Magic also bears a resemblance to the sort of government we've become more and more familiar with recently—the sort that makes indiscriminate arrests just to save face.

And, of course, there's also a war—but, the war that is about to commence in the community of wizards is drawn on clear lines, very much unlike the current ambiguity of the real world's wars.

The clearly drawn line between Good and Evil—and Right and Wrong—has always been one of the main attractions that Harry Potter's world has had for today's readers, both young and old. Even with beloved characters dying left and right, there is still this certainty that keeps Harry's world together.

It's a certainty that helps buoy up a story that, to some, may have become too dark and heavy. Nevertheless, the book makes for pretty enjoyable reading, and despite the plot's tendency to ramble, it is much better indeed than last year's rather incoherent "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix." Now, we'll just have to wait for Book Seven.

New faces brighten TV-film screens

By Nestor U. Torre

EVANGELISTA. Communication is key.

PATRICIA EVANGELista first made waves abroad, when she bested 59 other contestants and won the International Public Speaking Contest in London.

Her proud countrymen quickly made their appreciation felt, and Patricia became a media favorite. Now, she's on the media side of things herself, as a co-host of Studio 23's "Breakfast Supersized" and ANC's "Tara Na, Pinoy!"

And she's been tapped as one of the new endorsers of the new PLDT myDSL School Plan 99, a fast Internet connection great for multi-tasking and quickly getting work done.

Free speech

In all of her activities, communication is key to Patricia. She observes, "Free speech holds a lot of responsibilities, like fighting against prejudice and trying to correct mistakes.

"The Internet has made it easier to communicate in many ways. It knocks down borders of time and distance, and allows so much more to be done than before. I look for speed and accessibility in my internet provider. That's why, the moment I got PLDT myDSL, I never looked anywhere else!

In the movies, Amber Valletta co-stars with Jason Statham in the fast-paced action film, "Transporter 2." She plays a woman whose child has been kidnapped and injected with a new virus. When investigators fail to rescue her son, she is forced to work with Statham's character, and they take matters into their own hands.

Beauty and charisma

Valleta began modeling in Europe when she was only 15. Her beauty and charisma soon attracted the attention of movie producers, who cast her in the Harrison Ford-Michelle Pfeiffer starrer, "What Lies Beneath."

She really came into her own in "Hitch," where she co-starred with Will Smith. Valleta's action outing in "Transporter 2" is calculated to make her known to a wider audience.

For her part, Dutch actress Hanna Verboom makes her Hollywood debut in "Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo," opposite Fil-Am comic Rob Schneider. She plays Eva Voorsboch, the "special" woman who makes Deuce get over the loss of his wife.

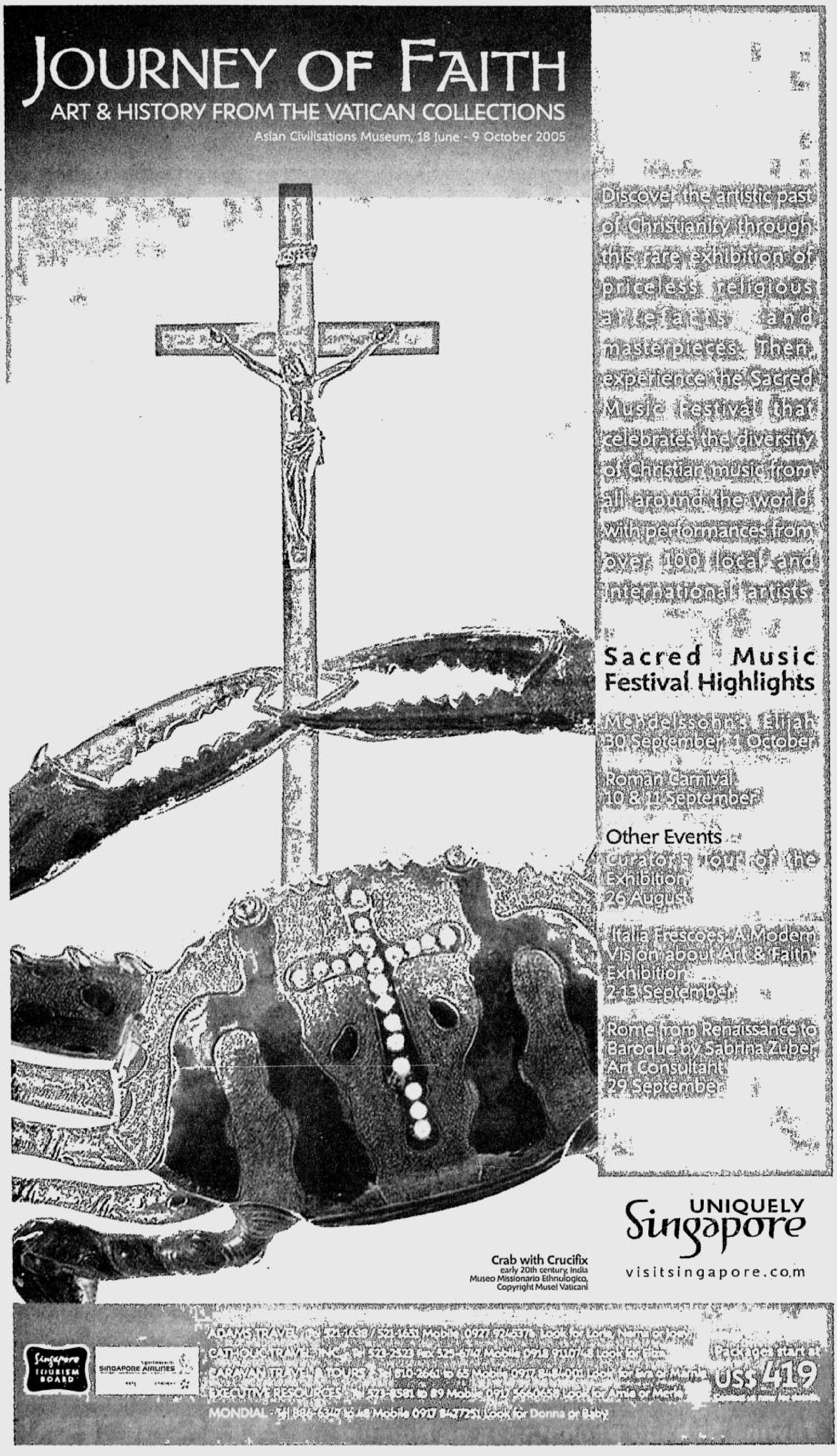
What makes Eva so special? She suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder! Hanna takes full advantage of the attention-calling possibilities of her unusual role, making sure to mitigate the strange symptoms of the medical disorder with her beauty, sweet innocence and natural flair for comedy.

Title role

Finally, in "The Exorcism of Emily Rose," Jennifer Carpenter plays the plum title role of the young student who becomes the subject of an exorcism that results in her death, leading to a high-profile investigation of the priest who performed the exorcism rite.

In the film, Emily Rose (Carpenter) leaves her sheltered rural home to attend college. She has no inkling what awaits her there: Alone in the dorm one night, she has her first terrifying "hallucination" and blackout.

As her attacks become more frequent and severe, Emily, a devout Catholic, chooses to undergo an exorcism conducted by the parish priest. When the young girl dies, the priest is charged with negligent homicide.



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DUNKIN' DONUTS
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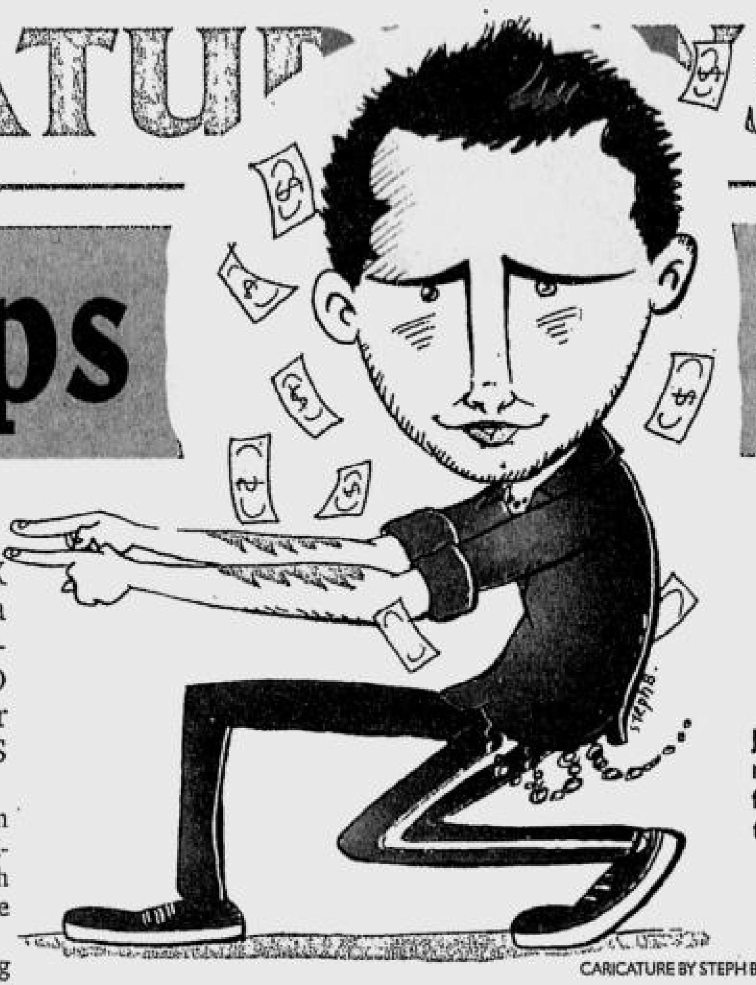
JD tops 'Rock Star' tilt

By Nestor U. Torre



CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO

JD. To sing on INXS' new album and forthcoming world tour.

LAST WEDNESDAY'S "ROCK Star" grand finals got off to a challenging start when surviving finalists Marty, MiG and JD were asked to provide lyrics for new songs written by the INXS band's Andrew Ferris.

The three survivors sensed that the session was an important test, because it would indicate which one of them would work best with INXS, not just as a performer but also in the crucial songwriting department.

Both Marty and MiG were praised for going to the session prepared. In particular, MiG was cited for his "strong sense of songwriting identity." One point for "our" bet!

Discipline

On the other hand, JD was faulted for being unprepared. Ferries sighed, "Passion is OK, but he needs more discipline, actually sitting down and doing it, instead of just thinking about it." Ouch.

But, the biggest test was still to come: Each finalist was told to perform one of the many rock classics featured on the show for the past 12 weeks. MiG chose "Bohemian Rhapsody," the number he had ceded to Suzie some weeks ago.

He performed it with great spirit and feeling, too, so his backers felt he could win the tilt, especially since Marty and JD opted to perform less spectacular numbers.

But, it was not to be. After praising MiG to high heavens, the INXS jurors decided to let go of him, leaving only Marty and JD to battle it out for the title.

Blizzard of votes

Before be bowed out, MiG thanked in particular his fans in Australia and the Philippines, who had supported him with a veritable blizzard of votes.

As for JD and Marty, they were given a final test that vividly showed which one of them would work best with INXS: They each performed a rock number with the band!

Strangely enough, this final phase of the competition had an ironic effect on us: After weeks of performing brilliantly alone, now that they were with INXS, both JD and Marty melted away into the band, seemingly "swallowed up" by the more experienced bandmates' performance. From a high-stakes competition, "Rock Star" became merely work as usual. That was a real letdown!

Best part

It told us that the best part of "Rock Star" was the search, and winning and performing with INXS on its new album and world tour were rather an anti-climax. In a way, we were glad that MiG was spared that dispiriting denouement...

Oh, yes, what was the band's verdict? The INXS jurors chose JD. Marty was disappointed, naturally, but his spirits soared once more when the INXS bandmates hinted that they would ask him to also "front" for them on their forthcoming world tour, along with JD!

So, our "dream" expressed last Wednesday that more than one of the three surviving finalists would be hired by the INXS band has become reality! Too bad that "our" MiG wasn't among the super-lucky two...

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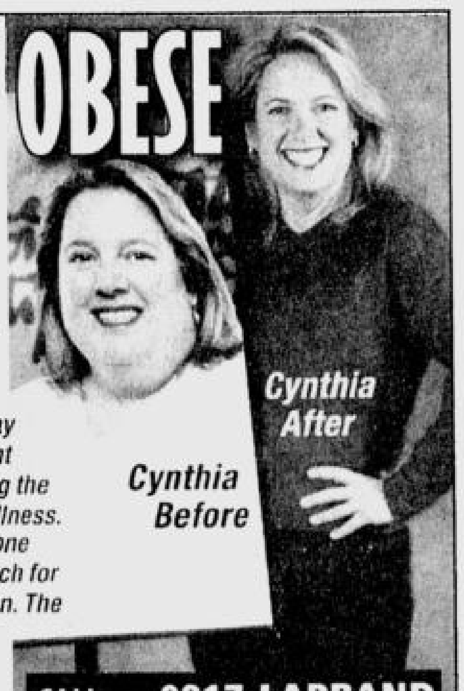

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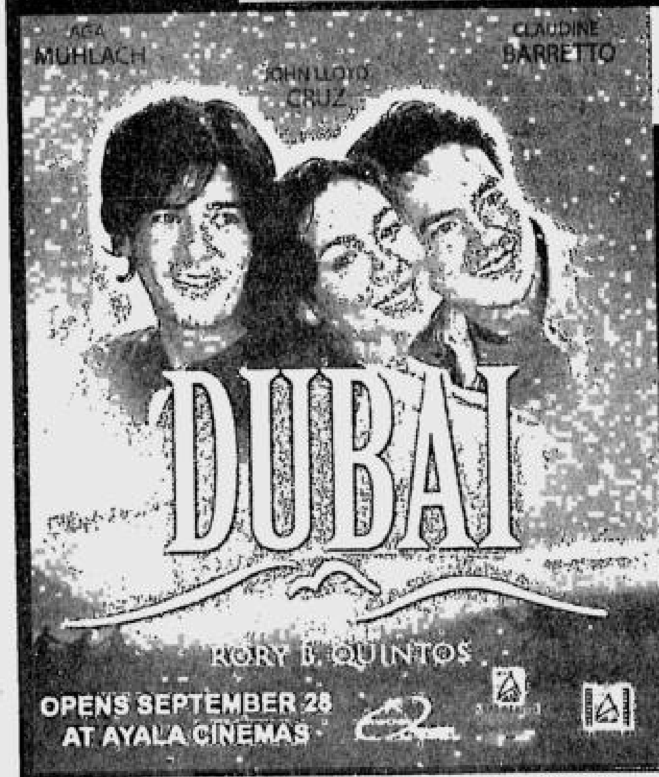

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Balanced mix in 'OC' soundtrack

By Noelani Torre

FOR A TV SERIES THAT HAS middle-of-the-road written all over it, "The O.C." (short for "Orange County") has managed to come up with surprisingly off-the-beaten-path soundtracks. The show's fourth soundtrack collection, "Music from the O.C.: Mix 4," is the most indie-sounding of them all, providing us with a listening experience that is certainly more interesting than watching the actual show.

Glamorous teens

Scenes of thin, glamorous teens getting all passionate and angsty are a dime a dozen on TV-land, after all. —But, The Futureheads, Pinback, Modest Mouse, and The Reindeer Section? You don't even hear them on mainstream radio, let alone mainstream TV! But then again, bubblegum culture can incorporate everything.

You don't have to be a fan of the show to enjoy the music. In any case, it's doubtful whether these songs actually have more significance than merely being backgrounders for the show's introspective scenes. Still, they're definitely a welcome change from the usual tear-drenched ballads one hears in soaps.

As proof of the show's—and its soundtracks'—ever-growing popularity, Beck's "Scarecrow" is debuting in this disc, as are pop-punk The Futureheads' "Decent Days and Nights," "Goodnight and Go" from Imogen Heap (half of Frou Frou), and Matt Pond PA's cover of the Oasis classic, "Champagne Supernova."

Predecessors

"Mix 4" is not quite as perky as its predecessors, but the bounce is still there. There's nothing livelier than the opening track, "Decent Days and Nights," A.C. Newman's "On the Table," and the quirky "The View" from Modest Mouse. They are among the mix's best tracks, but the less bubbly and more thoughtful material also holds up well.

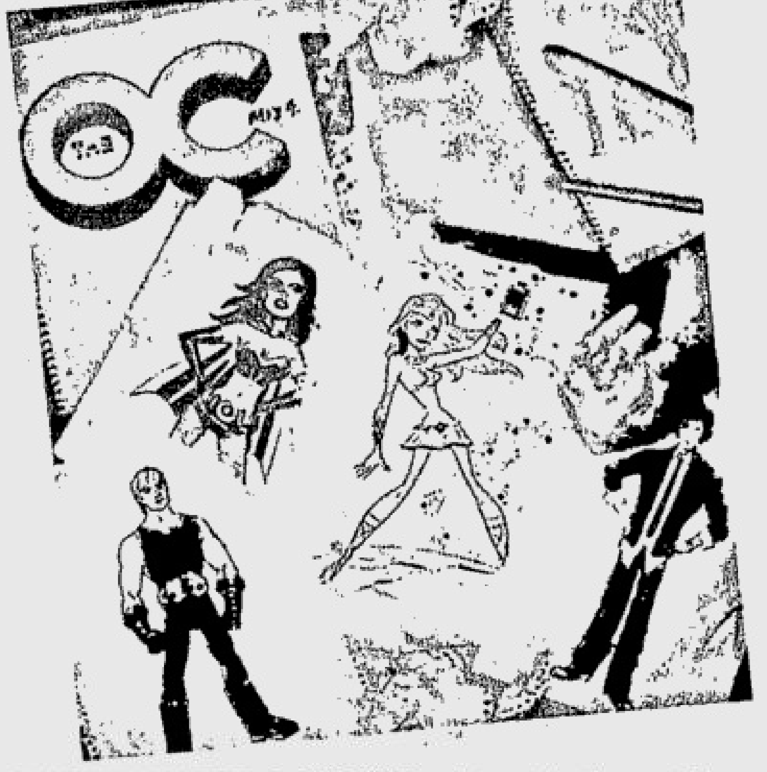
These include Scottish band Reindeer Section's "Cartwheels," Pinback's "Fortress," and Sufjan Stevens' "To Be Alone With You." They sit well with the more pop-sounding tunes, and the result is a balanced mix.

Problem

If this album has a problem, it's the fact that it's front-heavy. You'll find the better tracks in the upper third of the listing, with songs like the rather undistinguished "Hardcore Days and Softcore Nights" by Aqueduct.

The collection ends with a double whimper: the forgettable "Eve, The Apple of My Eye" by Bell X1 and a toothless rendition of "Champagne Supernova."

Still, you'll find yourself more pleasantly surprised than disappointed with the album. "The O.C." may not be something you'd want to watch, but you can always close your eyes—or wait for the next compilation.



"MUSIC FROM THE O.C.: MIX 4." More interesting than watching the actual show.

Moving on

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

HOW DOES ONE SURVIVE A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP? Sages share important lessons to get over a traumatic relationship, and help us become more mature and happy in life. Jagad Guru Siddhaswarupananda imparts these nuggets of wisdom:

1. "We are but sticks floating in the river of time. Today, we are together; tomorrow, we are thrown apart." The material world is full of changes; conditions and relationships are temporary. We have to accept this reality of life.

Preference

2. "We don't control people's hearts and lives." Although we may have our preference for how we want people to be, we are not in control. Even God, who is the Supreme Controller, does not force people to love or surrender to him. He respects free will. Unconditional love means respecting people's decisions on relationships.

3. "When one chapter in your life closes, move on to the next chapter." There is no sense in clinging to the past. Life goes on, and so should we.

4. "Turn the negative into a positive." What may initially appear to be a disaster can be a chance for greater opportunities. Focus on higher spiritual goals—render service to the Supreme Being, and work for the welfare of His children.

Best friend

5. "The Supreme Person is your best friend. He will never reject nor abandon you. He loves unconditionally, eternally."

Rejection may be a constant in this world, but our Best Friend will never reject us—he's just waiting for us to turn to Him!

Ryan, Bianca enjoy team-up

By Jocelyn Valle

"Y SPEAK" HOSTS RYAN AGONCILLO AND Bianca Gonzalez looked uncomfortable as they taped their debate show's first anniversary episode. Their outfits weren't matched like they usually are.

"Hindi kami hosts *ngayon,"* he told us. For a change, Ryan and Bianca were among the panelists who were tasked to take sides on the topic of the day: Love. They had their respective "significant" others with them as teammates—Judy Ann Santos and director Lino Cayetano.

Idea

"It was our producer's idea," said Bianca. "Lino had the worst time since he was not really into this kind of thing—*Hiyang-hiya siya!"* In contrast, Ryan and Juday were comfortable talking about their relationship.

"It was quick and painless," Ryan stated, referring to the time he and Santos had to promote their stint on "Maalaala Mo Kaya" on "The Buzz."

But, the hosts would rather instigate debate among their guests. "It's great to hear different opinions from young people, because our show encourages their active participation," Bianca added.

Ryan hastened to point out, though, that they were not out to change the world. They simply want to alter the perception that today's youngsters don't care, and that they don't have a voice.

Comfortable

Ryan is comfortable working with Bianca. Aside from "Y Speak," which is aired Sunday nights on Studio 23, the pair also co-hosts Channel 2's "Magandang Umaga, Pilipinas," alongside Julius Babao and Tintin Bersola.

The duo's partnership was forged more than a year ago when Pia Guanio left for GMA-7. Bianca, a TV and print ad model whose brother JC Gonzalez used to work with Ryan on "Breakfast," was tapped to replace Guanio. So far, it's been a fulfilling journey for the two.

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5. After your first entry is registered, your cell phone number is automatically locked to your name and will automatically be subscribed to the Vaseline info service which will include promo and entry updates.
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7. For each successful promo code texted, participants will receive a confirmation message. It will also include an update on the number of entries the participant has already accumulated for the grand draw.
8. The cost for each successful message sent is P2.50 for Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Talk n Text, Addict Mobile and Infinity subscribers. For Sun Cellular subscribers, cost per text is P2.00.
9. Promo is open nationwide. Winners should be female, 18 years old and above.
10. The product showing the sticker code must be kept to serve as proof of purchase. Winners must present the Vaseline Lotion or Vaseline Shampoo product with the sticker and promo code during the verification process. Pack and sticker should be 75% intact.
11. Winners will be contacted through their mobile phones by the Verification Team. The following must be presented by the winner/s for verification:
a. Valid ID with picture (e.g. Driver's License, Passport, Employee ID) bearing the same name and address that was used in registering for the promo.
b. SIM card used in the registration. In case of loss or theft, an affidavit of loss must be presented. For post-paid lines, a billing statement should be presented. If billing is under the name of another family member, a proof of authority to use the line in question should be presented.
c. The product showing the winning sticker code on the promo sticker; the sticker will have to pass security checks for authentication purposes.
12. The winners will receive a confirmation letter after the validation process. The confirmation letter has to be presented together with a valid ID when claiming the prizes.
13 Prizes must be claimed within 60 days after receipt of confirmation letter. Prizes not claimed will be forfeited in favor of Unilever Philippines.
14. All prizes are tax-free and are transferable prior to the issuance of the ticket. Prizes are not convertible to cash.
15. Travel may be availed of from January to March 2006, with final travel dates subject to availability of flights, hotel bookings and Hong Kong Disneyland passes. Unilever Philippines will arrange the travel through Kartagan International Travel & Tours Corp. (Kittco). Travel arrangements are non-rebookable, non-refundable and non-endorsable.
16. Each family trip package includes round-trip air fare for four persons to Hong Kong, 3-days / 2-nights hotel accommodations, round-trip hotel-airport transfers, 1-day Hong Kong Disneyland passes, Hong Kong City Tour, plus P10,000 pocket money per family of four. Packages are inclusive of travel taxes and travel insurance. Origin for all travel will be Manila.
17. Winners are responsible for securing passports & other travel documents needed for the trip. All travel expenses to be incurred in claiming and availing of the prize shall be shouldered by the winner.
18. Unilever Philippines reserves the right to publish and/or broadcast any winners' names, addresses, photos and likeness for advertising & publicity purposes without further compensation to the winner.
19. All employees of Unilever Philippines, their agencies / third party suppliers, Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecommunications Inc., Sun Cellular and their relatives up to second degrees of consanguinity and affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.
20. The winners declared by BFAD and Unilever are deemed final. In case of a dispute, the decision of Unilever with the concurrence of BFAD shall be considered final.
21. Last date for submission of entries is at 11:59 pm on Nov. 30, 2005. Draw date for all 50 family trips is on Dec. 1, 2005.
22. Only 120 entries per registered cellphone number per day are allowed.
23. For further inquiries, call 580-8800 (Metro Manila) or 1-800-10-5847258 (Toll Free) or text in VASELINE ASK <your question> to 2955.

* Hong Kong Disneyland

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POPULAR Japanese star Mimura topbills sequel of "One Missed Call."

'Blade of the Rose'

AFTER THE 2003 HONG KONG FILM, "The Twins Effect," hit it big at the box office, viewers asked for a sequel—and its producers have finally obliged with "Blade of the Rose," which is currently showing in town.

"Blade" is a big-budget fantasy epic that sets its story in Huadu. In the entire country, women have total dominion over men!

But, trouble threatens when a prophecy is made about a boy who will rise up to seize power and restore control to the male regime.

Popular Hong Kong stars Charlene Choi and Gillian Chung join brothers Char and Leaf in their quest for treasure. Their journey leads to a master swordsman who also wants to overthrow the empress.

Boosting the movie's star appeal is the special participation of Jackie Chan and his son, Jaycee, who's making his screen debut in the movie.

MONTAGE

'One Missed Call, 2'

The cursed phone conversation continues as "One Missed Call, 2" the bloodcurdling sequel to the terrifying Japanese horror-thriller, "One Missed Call," starts its run in Metro Manila on Sept. 28. Making his film directing debut is Rempei Tsukamoto, the helmer of many hit "japanovelas."

'Land of the Dead'

Legendary horror director George A. Romero's latest chiller, "Land of the Dead," is set in a harrowing future in which the world as we know it is only a distant memory. What's left of mankind is cordoned off behind the walls of a fortified city, to protect it from the growing army of evolving zombies storming its weakening defenses. Simon Baker, Dennis Hopper, Asia Argento and John Leguizamo star.

'Elf'

On Sept. 25 at 8 p.m., HBO screens "Elf," starring Will Ferrell and James Caan. Ferrell plays Buddy, an overgrown elf who leaves Santa's workshop and looks for his family in the Big Apple.

'Worldwide Day of Play'

Nickelodeon's pro-social initiatives, "Let's Just Play," culminates on Sunday, Oct. 2, when the network encourages kids around the world to spend the afternoon playing on the channel's annual Worldwide Day of Play, with Nick-style fun and activities in a free event throughout the day.

In addition, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Nickelodeon will preempt regular programming with images of kids playing and messages encouraging them to go out and engage in physical play.

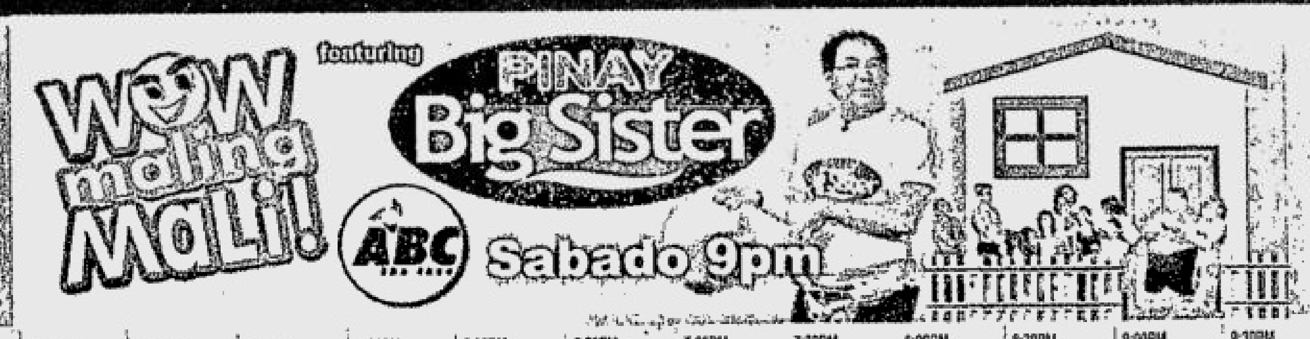
In the Philippines, kids are invited to play at The Fort, Bonifacio Global City (beside NBC tent), from 2 to 6 p.m., with a special surprise at the end of the day. Sponsors include Nestlé, Milo, Hasbro, Smart Kid, Purefoods, Kraft Oreo, Bisolvon and Jakks Pacifics.

'Bayan-Bayanan'

Missy Maramara stars in Tanghalang Ateneo's "Bayan-Bayanan" today, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Ateneo's Rizal Mini-Theater.

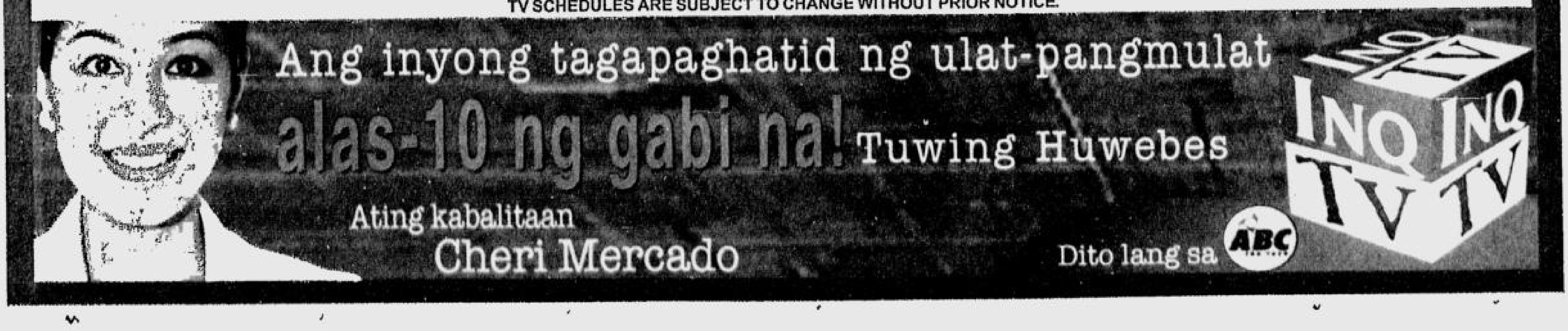
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Saturday, September 24, 2005


WOW maling MaLi! featuring PINAY Big Sister ABC Sabado 9pm
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
NBN				Corporate Billiards League		Kamao		Tang ng Bayan (Live)			The Working President	GSIS Member's Hour		Specials				Auto Focus	
ABS-CBN 2	Entertainment Konek				Close Up To Fame		Nginiig: The Hidden Files		My Juan And Only		Quizon Avenue	Pinoy Big Brother	TV Patrol World	Magandang Gabi Bayan		Sabado Movie Greats			
ABC 5	Winner TV Shopping		Junior Watch	KNN	Anime Ring Kaisho		Lizzie Mcguire	Islamusik		Mr. Fighting		Club TV		Wow Maling Mali		Ariel And Maverick	Memories Of Manila/ Inang Bayan		
GMA 7	Startalk			Wish Ko Lang		Wag Kukurap	Pinoy Pop Superstar		Bitoy's Funniest Videos/Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho		Imbestigador		Hokus Pocus			Showbiz Stripped			
RPN 9		Tara Lets	Ma'm Working	Biyaheng Langit	Kids TV	Barangay Bida		Isumbong mo kay Tulfo		Medical Investigation		CSI: Miami		Flyin				Money Talk	
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		Nation's Peacekeeper	Good Take	Home Shopping Network		Pangarap Kong Jackpot						Bitag		In This Corner			
SBN 21		New Life TV Shopping		Friends Again		Sheperds Voice		EZ Shop		JAM		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Music Video		Oras Ng Himala	
Studio 23								Sports TV	Mr. Bean	Gilmore Girls	Jack & Bobby	The Bachelorette		Studio 23 Present					Reel Deal
MTV Philippines	The Bravery: Live at Kokos	Boiling Points	MTV Live	MTV Live	Viva La Bam	Wild N' Out	The 70's House	Punk'D	Burned	MTV2	MTV & Billabong Present		Simple Plan	2005 VMA	Meet The Barkers	Brand New	Mato: 5 Things About Kanye West	MTV Play	MTV Live
MYX	Star MYX	Urban MYX	Rock MYX	OPM MYX	My MYX	Take 5	MYX Backtrax	MYX Firsts	Mellow MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents		Mobile MYX Top Picks	Top Of The Pops	MYX Live!		MYX Backtrax	Mellow MYX
CNN	World Business This Week	World News	People In The News	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News	International Correspondents	World News	Global Office	World News	The Daily Show John Stewart Global Edition	World News	World Sport	World News	Talk Asia	World News	Diplomatic License
Solar Sports													Sports Desk	Phil. 9-Ball Open 2005					
Cinemax			Stranger At The Door (3.45PM)			Traveller (5:15 PM)				Red Dragon				Money Talks			Wild Things 2: The Glades		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	The Yeltsin Project				Almost Saints				Fast Food High				H2O			H2O (10.35PM)		
Disney Channel		Sabrina, The Animated Series	Lizzie Mcguire	Kim Possible	House Of Mouse	Totally Spies	Mr. Bean	American Dragon	Brandy & Mr. Whiskers	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Wonderful World Of Disney			Mr. Bean	That's So Raven	Phil Of The Future	Even Stevens	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Discovery Channel		Human Discovery				Zero Hour		Hour China		Wild Discovery				Guilty Or Innocent		Mummy Autopsy		Extreme Discovery	
National Geographic		Big Bite Nite				Gates Of Hell		Creature Feature				Forces Of The Kalahari		Nula Pambu	Leopard Rescue	Big Bite Nite			
Cartoon Network		Police Academy	The Detective Squad	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	Winx Club	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Samurai Jack	Party Wagon			Cartoon Cartoon Show	Crush Gear Nitro	The Grimazers	Justice League	Sealab 2021 (11.15PM)	Aqua Teen Hunger Force
Nickelodeon	Sabrina, The Teenage Witch	Unfabulous	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	Avatar: The Last Airbender	Danny Phantom	My Life As A Teenage Robot	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Fairly Odd Parents	Four Eyes	Romeo	Girls In Love	The Amanda Show	My Dad The Rock Star	Four Eyes	The Wild Thornberrys	Are You Afraid of the Dark?
Lifestyle Network	Carol Duvall	Best Of Spanish Design		Radical Sabbatical	Road & Track	Genuine Article	Food Fight	Date Plate	Emeril Live		Nigella Bites	How Do I Look		NY Fashion Week	Look For Less	Best Kept Hollywood Secrets		Fashion Trance	
Star World		The Collector		Miami Vice		Monk		Roswell		Enterprise		TNA Xplosion	8 Simple Rules For Dating My Teenage Daughter	I Dare You		Enterprise		The Kumars At No. 42	Arrested Development/Less Than Perfect
AXN		Joan Of Arc				WRC 2005: Great Britain		30 Seconds To Fame	E Buzz	Now See This	Now See This	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Las Vegas		House		The Shield	
JackTV		Worst Case Scenario		Cheat	Filter	Samurai Jack	X-Men	Justice League Unlimited	The Batman	WWE Bottomline		Wwe Raw				Drawn Together	The Man Show	Chappelle's Show	Beat The Geeks
ETC		Saturday Night Live		For Love Or Money		Joan Of Arcadia		The O.C		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Last Comic Standing		Saturday Night Live		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
HBO	Detonator			Short Circuit			Cybernut (5.45 PM)			The Rundown (7.15 PM)				Beyond Borders				Deadwood 06: Plague (11.05PM)	
Star Movies		Nicholas Nickleby				Face/Off (5.15 PM)					Phone Booth (7.40 PM)			Twisted			Air Force One (10.40PM)		
Cinema One	Tatay-Nic				Wasabi				My Movie				Trip				Pa-Siyam		
EWTN	Voices On Virtue	Angelus (3.15PM)	The Beatitudes	Story Keepers	Faith Factor C	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Life Is Worth Living	Catholic Compass		The World Over		Daily Mass Live		Angelus (9.15 PM)	A Christian Pilgrimage To Jordan	Choices We Face	Crisis In Culture	Life on The Rock Encore	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

'05 BOP surplus seen at $853M

Drop in financial, capital accounts to cut 8-mo gains

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas sees the country posting a balance of payments surplus of $853 million by the end of this year, reversing a deficit of $282 million in 2004.

The country's BOP surplus hit $2 billion in the first half of the year and $2.29 billion as of August. The expected decline in the capital and financial accounts in the second half, however, would likely cut the surplus to $853 million by December.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the BSP did not want to assume a higher BOP surplus, mainly in view of the continued rise in global crude oil prices.

"On one hand, we have lower exports while imports are rising because of the high cost of oil," Guinigundo said.

"On the other hand, OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances are rising and there are inflows of foreign investments, both direct and portfolio," he said.

Guinigundo said the BSP's assumptions on oil prices had so far been more conservative versus actual rates, but uncertainties remained, particularly in the fourth quarter when fuel consumption in western countries was seasonally higher.

From January to August this year, the country's BOP surplus reached $2.29 billion, a turnaround from a deficit of $220 million a year ago. The first eight-month figure was the highest cumulative BOP level seen so far this decade.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between

'05 BOP/ B6

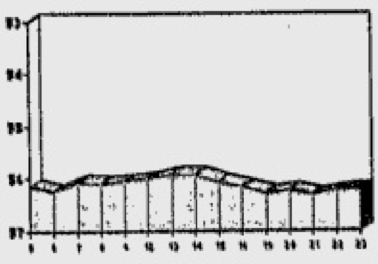
WHAT'S INSIDE

Deadline for cell phone dealers set /B2

Cocktales: SC admits to having been duped /B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



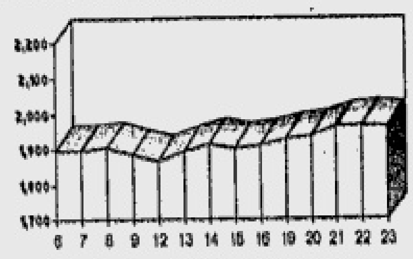
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P56.225 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 23, 2005

¥111.13= $1
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 22, 2005

GOLD: 465.00-465.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Sept. 23, 2005

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Market down 0.29%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 0.29 percent lower as investors used Thursday's hike in interest rates as an excuse to take some profits after a five-day winning streak, dealers said.

A number of stocks were due for a correction after reaching overbought levels but support for index heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT) limited the downside, they added.

The composite index fell 5.76 points to 1,959.51 after trading between 1,953.22 and 1,966.86. Volume was 415.9 million shares worth P781.1 million.

The all-shares index fell 1.52 points to 1,186.68. *AFP*

CAP ADMITTED it would be unable to service its debts since it had more liabilities than assets.

CAP gets reprieve from paying claims, debts

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL COURT ON Thursday allowed beleaguered pre-need giant College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. to suspend payments to its creditors and plan holders, the company's lawyer said.

The temporary stay order, penned by Judge Romeo Barza of Branch 61, was issued in line with CAP's petition for rehabilitation, which was scheduled for hearing on Oct. 26.

But while it granted CAP a temporary reprieve from paying claims, the court prohibited the pre-need firm from "selling, encumbering, transferring or disposing in any manner any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business."

CAP was also prohibited from making any payment of its outstanding liabilities as of Sept. 8, 2005, the date of the filing of its petition.

Also, the court appointed accountant Mamerto Marcelo Jr. to serve as CAP's interim rehabilitation receiver.

The order, which was dated Sept. 13, 2005, was received by CAP on Sept. 22, said CAP lawyer Gilbert Reyes.

All creditors and interested parties, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, were directed by the court to file their comments on or opposition to CAP's rehabilitation plan 10 days before the hearing on Oct. 26.

CAP—with more than 700,000 plan holders—was the third pre-need company that had sought court protection due to financial problems. The two others were Pacific Plans Inc. and Platinum Plans Phils. Inc.

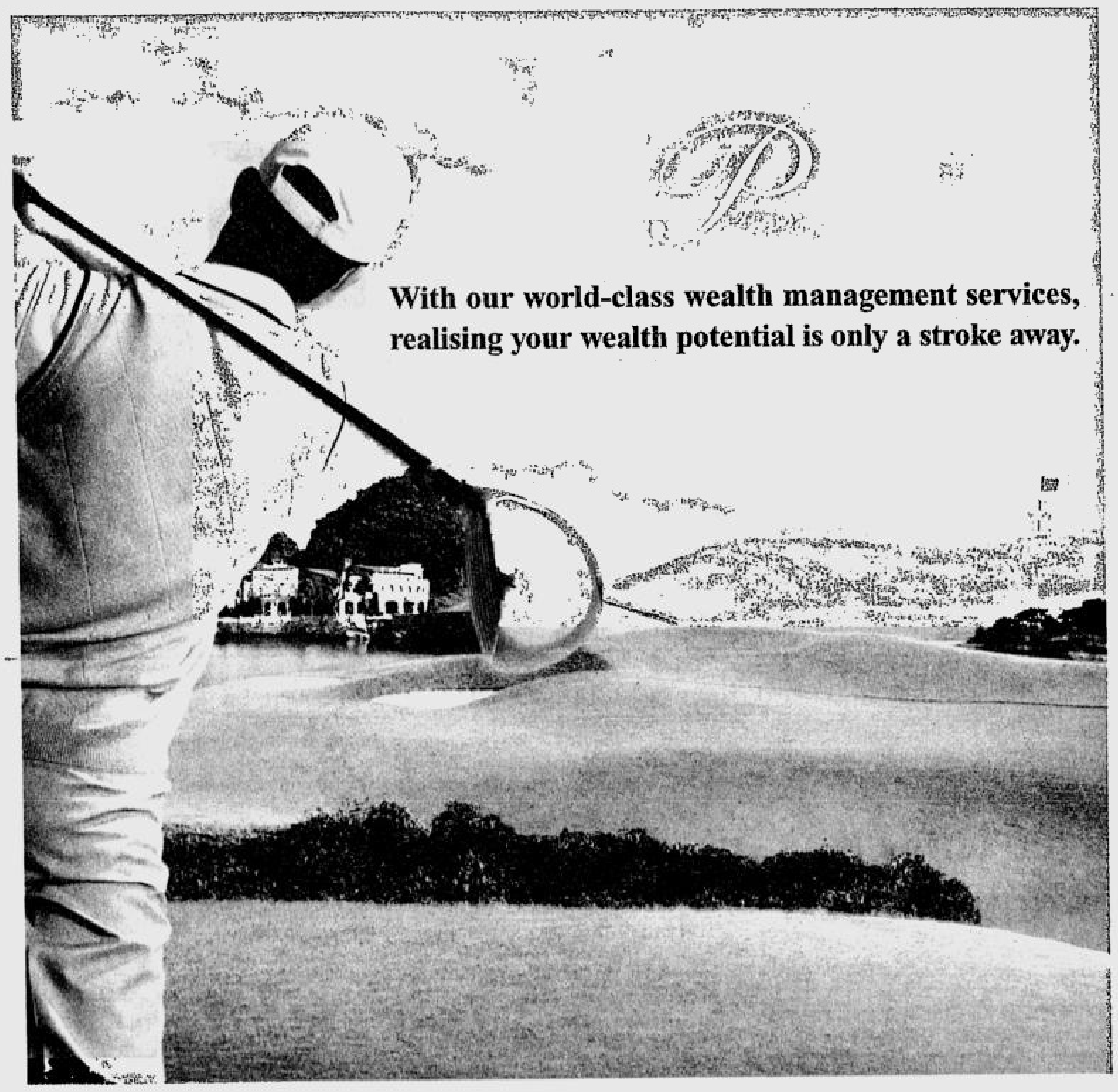
Reyes earlier said CAP decided to go to court for rehabilitation to keep its business going. An INQUIRER source, however, said it was to preempt the SEC's plan to take over the management of the pre-need firm, which was feared to lead to the company's liquidation.

"It was becoming increasingly difficult to work out a solution without prejudicing the interest of the plan holders. The whole thesis of this rehabilitation plan is we don't want to end CAP (as a business)," Reyes had said.

CAP's licenses to operate and sell plans were suspended in August 2004.

In its petition for rehabilitation, CAP admit-

CAP ADMITTED/ B6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Promo period: September 10 to October 8, 2005

Cell phone dealers given until yearend to register

bBy Clarissa S. Batino

THE NATIONAL TELECOMmunications Commission is giving thousands of mobile phone dealers and repair shops until the end of the year to comply with a year-old order for them to register with the regulator.

The Commission felt the policy adopted last year lacked a sufficient information campaign, resulting in the launch two weeks ago of a program called "NTC on Wheels."

Like the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which rolls out its "BIR on Wheels" program during the tax season, the Commission is conducting an information campaign and bringing its program to malls where mobile phone shops and service centers abound.

NTC chair Ronald Solis said the program has no intention of apprehending thousands of phone dealers and repair shop operators that have yet to enlist with the agency. But he admitted that the low registration turnout has been discouraging.

The NTC estimated that there are between 10,000 and 15,000 mobile phone dealers and between 5,000 and 10,000 cellular phone repair shops in the National Capital Region alone.

As of September, however, only 303 service centers and 695 phone dealers in the NCR have registered with the NTC.

Including all other regions, only 1,501 repair shops and 1,883 mobile phone dealers heeded the NTC's order to register. The agency's circular took effect last Sept. 25, 2004.

"This is going to be purely an information drive and not an apprehension [drive]. We are also putting up registration booths in malls and areas where these shops can mostly be found," said the NTC chief.

A DURIAN vendor sorts varieties of newly harvest durian along Anda Street in Davao City at the peak of the harvest season which ends in October. During prices drop to as low as P20 a kilo during this period.

BING GONZALES, PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

SOP opera

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

NOWADAYS NOBODY DARES to catch the attention of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, known down here in my barangay as the B-I-R. You know—spelled out!

The BIR remains in a bad mood these days, even after its having filed truckloads of tax evasion cases against high profile people, such as hoards of businessmen, a few celebrities, and one but only one public official.

The other day, the BIR filed another P84-million tax evasion case against a company that had a high profile personality among its executives.

And so, maybe out of fear, nobody today wants to come anywhere near the BIR, much less inquire with the bureau about issues of national significance.

Okay, if everybody chooses to be quiet about it, I just have to ask the question burning in the minds of thousands of taxpayers.

And that is, do we have a new BIR commissioner named "Bong?"

***

NO, IN FACT, we don't.

(The name of the new BIR commissioner is Jose Buñag, and his nickname is "Jojo." He was a long-time tax lawyer before he joined the BIR as deputy commissioner just a couple of years ago, together with now resigned BIR commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., who remains at large even after the Hyatt 10 incident.)

The big question, anyway, actually concerns the BIR collection last month.

Quoting an unnamed official of the finance department's Bureau of Treasury, reports said the BIR overstated its collection by some P1.4 billion. Hmm.

That the BIR would want to claim more revenue collection than it actually got, can worry even the most law-abiding guys in business.

One, the BIR may be forced to recover the "overstated" collection later, and when the BIR is in such a bad mood, you can never tell who is going to get hurt.

Moreover, the report put the BIR in a bad light, its credibility perhaps shut, coming as it is just as this cute administration is busy with a serious tax campaign.

It is a big issue, and it gets the business sector worried, because it implies that the BIR is doing some accounting magic known as "window dressing."

In the early 1980s, we got into trouble with foreign creditors, because somebody in the Marcos dictatorship had a bright idea to window-dress our international reserves.

And so I have to ask Buñag the question pointblank: Is your nickname Bong, and did the BIR overstate its collection last month?

Well, if the BIR did, according to Buñag, the BIR has been overstating its collection all this time. What it did was nothing out of the ordinary, he said.

You know—it was SOP. So what is this all about—SOP opera? Sorry.

***

BASED on the report, which in turn was based on the leak from an anonymous treasury official, the BIR posted as revenue collection some P1.4 billion in documentary stamp tax on T-bills.

It should not have been done, according to the coward, *este*, the anonymous source, because of a new policy adopted by this cute administration.

In effect, the new policy says that the BIR should not count as "collection" certain non-cash tax payment of other government outfits.

One particular case, supposedly, involved documentary stamp taxes worth P1.4 billion on those particular T-bills.

If that is the case, according to Buñag, the BIR only learned about the new policy through the news report.

Actually, the BIR has been counting as revenue the non-cash tax payments of government outfits, as so-called journal entry vouchers, or mere book entry.

The same was true with the withholding tax on T-bills, since it is the payment of the buyer, which was reported to the BIR as so-called tax remittance advice.

As for the doc stamp tax on T-bills, the BIR has also been reporting it as revenue collection ever since Magellan was still a Boy Scout.

It's just that for that one particular case involving T-bills, the Bureau of Treasury wanted the BIR to remove the doc stamp tax.

Still, according to Buñag, an official of the Bureau of Treasury informed a regional director of the BIR later that the BIR could count the P1.4-billion doc stamp tax as revenue for August.

In short, there is no window dressing whatsoever. Whew!

***

BUÑAG fears that the leak from the Bureau of Treasury might give the BIR a public blackeye, which it hardly needs nowadays.

And so the BIR may have to thresh things out with the Bureau of Treasury once and for all, even if the BIR could not flush out the coward, *este*, the anonymous source.

Buñag said they may have to sit down with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves as soon as he comes back from the United States.

Well, I think they better do. In this budget deficit-challenged cute administration of Gloriaetta, the credibility of the BIR can be everything.

If the BIR really cheats by "overstating" its collection, what example does it show to businesses about cheating by "understating" their income?

Plus, the media offensive of BIR on high profile tax cases may just go, well, "puweh"—with some yellow stuff in it.

Employers want strike restrictions

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION of the Philippines yesterday raised a howl over a proposed amendment to the Labor Code that eases restrictions on workers' strikes.

Ecop president Rene Y. Soriano said House Bill No. 3723, filed by Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and other party-list solons, runs counter to economic and social stability "and to life, personal safety and health."

Soriano said the Labor Secretary should not be stripped of the power to assume jurisdiction over labor disputes or strikes that put the nation's interest at stake.

Under the law, labor disputes and strikes could be put under compulsory arbitration through the National Labor Relations Commission.

Workers in strategic industries such as transportation installations, like airports and docks, are barred from staging strikes that would disrupt the normal operations of society at large.

Unionists like Beltran say this prohibition robs the working class of their right to act collectively and further their interests against those of management.

Soriano said, however, that neighboring countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand have laws that curtail strikes when they threaten to harm the economy or stability of the country.

The Ecop chief said even US President George W. Bush has used his powers to intervene in a number of labor disputes where a strike or lockout was deemed to harm the economy.

"[One can] imagine the havoc that would befall the country if, for example, strikes are staged in industries like the generation and distribution of power supply, the production and distribution of oil products, communication facilities, banking, transportation, supply and distribution of foodstuff, and hospitals," he said.

High electricity costs hit Philex Mining margins

By Christine Gaylican

PHILEX MINING CORP. IS REELING from escalating electricity rates that have cut margins from high market prices of copper and gold ore in the international market.

Philex Mining executive vice president and chief operating officer Jose Ernesto Villaluna Jr. said in an interview that electricity fees for over the last quarter have risen to P100 million a month.

"Our electricity bill has risen by 19 percent from the P84 million a month we paid last year to run the mines," explained Villaluna.

He said the company would have to negotiate with the state-owned National Power Corp. on how electricity costs could be curbed.

He noted that the high cost of electricity may eat up revenues that would be generated with the completion of its 782-meter level line project for its Padcal Copper-Gold Mines as it becomes operational next month.

French firms eye rural electrification

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER SIGNING A 17.5-MILLION euro (P1.2-billion) contract with the National Power Corp. for the electrification of 128 barangays in Masbate, French consortium Paris-Manila Technology Corp. (Pamatec) and ETDE of Bouygues Construction are considering providing another 5 million euros (P300 million) for other similar projects.

In an interview during the PowerTrends conference and exhibition, Pamatec senior vice president and chief operating officer Philippe Saubier said the consortium would look at how the implementation of the Masbate project progresses before making its decision.

If the project is successful, he said the group could fund other rural electrification projects of the government.

He said the other areas that the consortium could fund would depend on the Department of Energy's rural electrification plan.

The P1.2-billion contract, which Napocor and the French consortium signed last Wednesday, was under the Philippine Rural Electrification Service (PRES) Project, an initiative that aims to energize all barangays nationwide by 2008 and provide 100-percent individual household connection by 2017.

Funding for the program will come from the 22.5-million euro (P1.5-billion) French Financial Protocol that the Philippine and French governments signed in November last year.

The consortium is looking at earmarking the remaining P300 million of this French Financial Protocol for similar rural electrification projects.

The Masbate electrification project is expected to benefit 18,000 households in 128 of the province's barangays when it is completed two years from now.

Napocor data show that Masbate has the lowest electrification level in the country, covering only 56.18 percent of the province as of end-July.

The state firm provides electricity to the province through its Small Power Utilities Group (Spug) using three power plants: the 2.5-megawatt (MW) Masbate diesel power plant I, the 14.4-MW Power Barge 105 and the 1.4-MW Ticao diesel power plant.

According to Napocor estimates, peak demand in the province is roughly 10 MW.

LIGHT
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB No. 02-051-05R

The Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) invites duly licensed security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

BIDDING FOR THE JANITORIAL SERVICES CONTRACT OF LRT LINE 1 & 2 SYSTEMS

LINE 1	BUDGET	CONTRACT PERIOD
AREA III (LRV's)	*PHP 9,536,760.00*	*12 Months*
LINE 2		
AREA I (Depot & LRV's)	*PHP 8,469,360.00*	*12 Months*

Bid Documents may be secured from the LRTA Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the Ground Floor, Administration Bldg., LRTA Compound, Aurora Blvd., Pasay City, Metro Manila, during regular office hours from **October 3-18, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) per area to be participated in by prospective bidders.

Site Inspection will be held on **October 11 & 19, 2005** at 10:00 a.m. For the purpose of clarifying issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **November 3, 2005** at the Cafeteria Room, Line 2 Depot, Santolan, Pasig City at 1:00 p.m. The BAC Secretariat shall receive sealed bids not later than **November 17, 2005**, 1:00 p.m., and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter at the Cafeteria Room, Line 2 Depot, Santolan, Pasig City.

LRTA reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of its bids, and will entertain only such bid/s established to be the most advantageous to the LRTA.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Sept. 24, 2005)

LIGHT
RAIL
TRANSIT
AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB No. 02-052-05R

The Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) invites duly licensed security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

BIDDING FOR THE SECURITY SERVICES CONTRACT OF LRT LINE 2 SYSTEM

AREA	BUDGET	CONTRACT PERIOD
1 Depot	PHP 11,100,480.00	12 Months
II Revenue Line	PHP 64,096,320.00	12 Months

Bid Documents may be secured from the LRTA Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the Ground Floor, Administration Bldg., LRTA Compound, Aurora Blvd., Pasay City, Metro Manila, during regular office hours from **October 3-18, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) per area to be participated in by prospective bidders.

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Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Sept. 24, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City
Tel. No. (062) 992-7763

SF-GOOD-05 REF No CL – 05-09-0333

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The *City Government of Zamboanga*, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Contract	*Location/Office*	*Brief Description*	*Approved Budget for the Contract*	*Contract Duration P.R. No.*	*Delivery Period*
1 Drug and Medicine	STOCKS'CHO	Betahistine Mesylate Canesten Vaginal Tabs etc	203,975.00 149,160.00 63,275.00 103,500.00 1,220,075.00 123,500.00 70,000.00 321,750.00 370,915.00 508,500.00 179,500.00 340,000.00 3,654,150.00	100-05-09-1935 100-05-09-1936 100-05-09-1938 100-05-09-1937 100-05-09-1921 100-05-09-1922 100-05-09-1931 100-05-09-1929 100-05-09-1927 100-05-09-1928 100-05-09-1925 100-05-09-1923	15 wd

Prospective bidders should have experience in understanding a similar project within the last (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	September 16-28
2. Pre-Bid Conference will be conducted at City Budget Office, City Hall, Zamboanga	September 17, 2005
3. Opening of Bids	September 29, 2005
4. Bid Evaluation	September 29, 2005
5. Post qualification	September 30, 2005
6. Notice of Award	October 3, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,500.00 each item to the City Treasurer

The City Government of Zamboanga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved:
(Sgd.) **VIRGINIA SAN AGUSTIN GARA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Sept. 19 & 24, 2005)

SC admits to having been duped

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE SUPREME COURT, IN A rare admission, said it had fallen victim to a legal trickery in the last five years, with no less than the Presidential Commission on Good Government foisting the dodgy maneuver on the country's learned jurists.

"We were … misled in issuing the TRO," the SC Third Division said, referring to a March 29, 2000 temporary restraining order that it issued against a Sandiganbayan decision approving the Ramos-era compromise agreement between Malacañang/PCGG and the late Marcos crony Potenciano Ilusorio.

The high court's admission was contained in a resolution it made public earlier this week, in which it denied a fresh PCGG appeal—originally filed by the Estrada-era PCGG—to stop the Ramos-sanctioned compromise agreement involving the Philcomsat Group.

With the SC now upholding the compromise agreement, GMA nominees led by Mike Arroyo's cousin Benito Araneta, a holdover Erap nominee, will lose control of the cash-rich Philcomsat Group.

"In fact, even before the petition in these cases was filed, the implementation of the compromise judgment had (already) been partially effected" by then PCGG Chair Magdangal Elma, the SC Third Division noted.

"This was never mentioned in their petitions," the SC Third Division added, referring to the petitions filed by the Estrada-era PCGG and two sequestered private companies against the Sandiganbayan.

The faulty five-year-old TRO was issued "by the authority of" Justice Jose Melo, then chair of the Third Division, whose other members included Jose Vitug, Artemio Panganiban and Fidel Purisima, father of resigned GMA finance secretary Cesar Purisima.

The Supreme Court at that time was holding its annual summer session in Baguio City.

"In any case, the TRO has become moot and academic, the same having no more legal force as the act sought to be restrained had been partially implemented and considering our decision in this case," the present Third Division said.

The present Third Division is composed of Justices Artemio Panganiban (chair), Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, Renato Corona, Conchita Carpio Morales and Cancio Garcia.

Panganiban took no part in the present as well as the 2000 deliberations, explaining that he had been a "former counsel of a party in the case of origin."

One of the counsels of the private firms that the Third Division said had misled it was identified as Rene A.V. Saguisag, the former Cory Aquino spokesman turned counsel for deposed President Estrada.

Ironically, because of the 2000 TRO and the ensuing squabble

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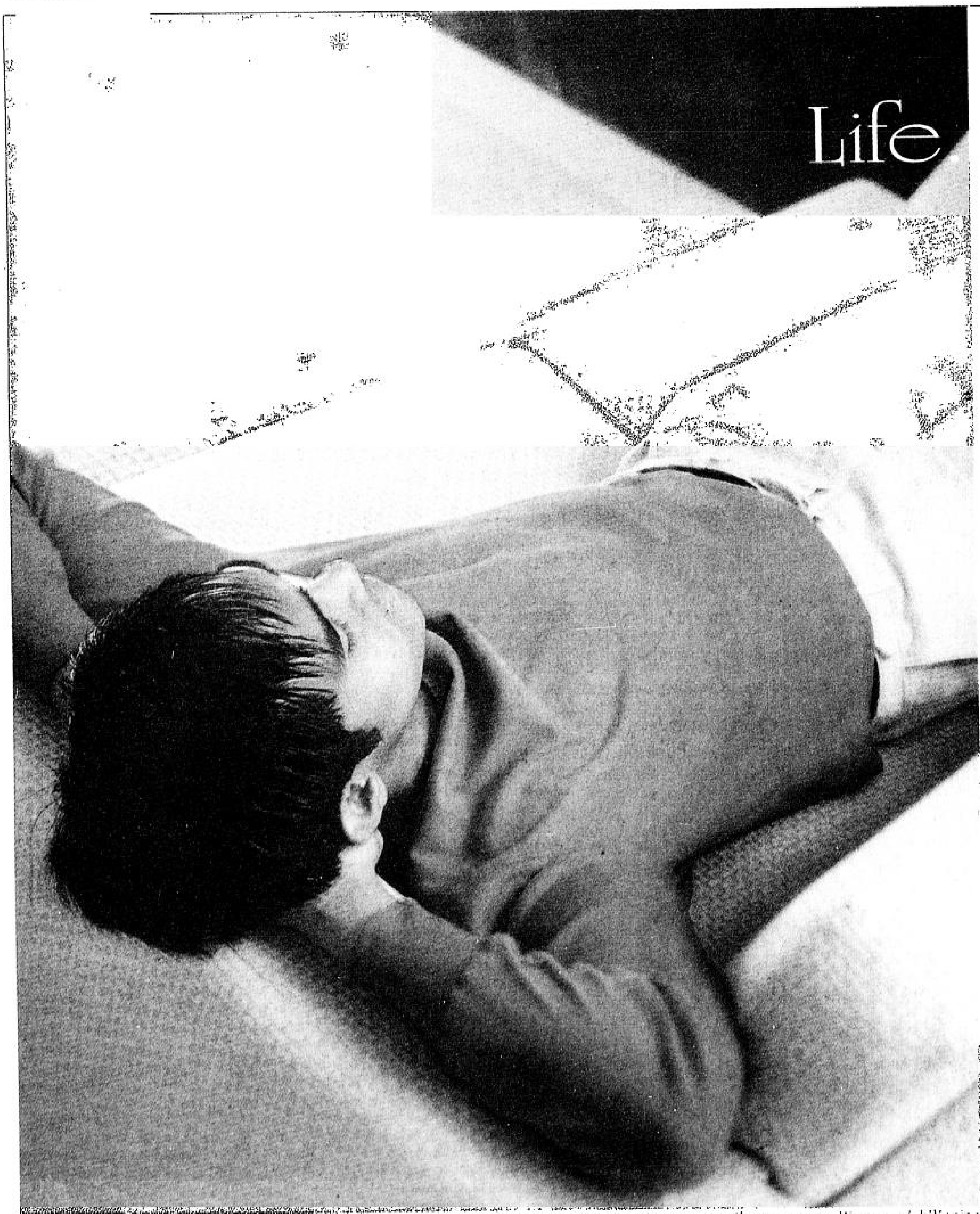

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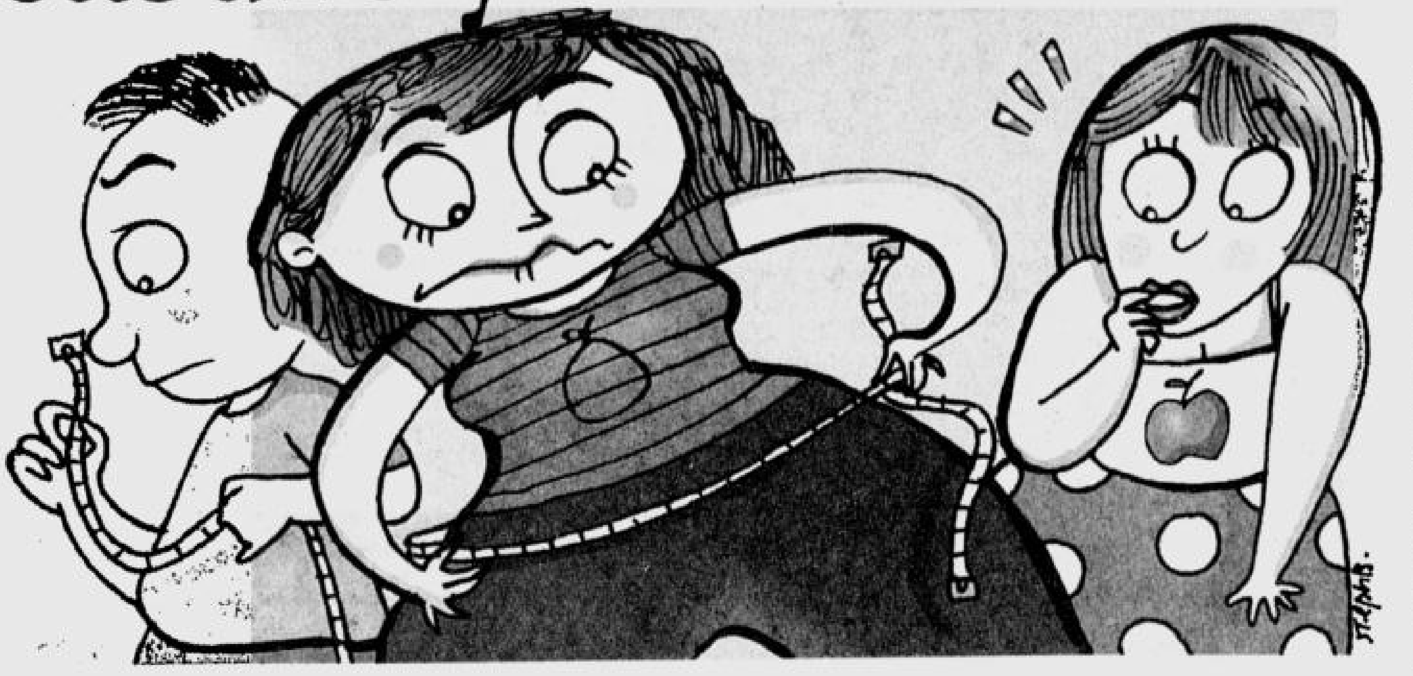
Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**
Assistant Editor **Stella O. Gonzales**

Tape measure your heart attack risk



By Charles E. Buban

ARE YOU APPLE- OR pear-shaped? This is an important health question these days in assessing one's risk of having a heart attack.

While in the past it was believed that any extra weight was unhealthy, doctors are now saying that the location of one's fat cells may predict whether the excess weight is a potential health risk or just an unattractive nuisance.

"People whose fat collects around the waist—the classic apple shape—are at higher risk of heart disease than their pear-shaped counterparts, whose fat collects around the hips," said Philippine Heart Association president Dr. Mariano Lopez.

Lopez said during the launch of World Heart Day, which falls tomorrow, that having an apple-shaped body is a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke, reducing the average age of a first heart attack by between four and eight years.

Better guide

Lopez said the more straightforward measurement of the waist circumference in fact, correlates more strongly with several known cardiovascular risk factors including lipid profiles, blood pressure and glucose levels than does body mass index, which can only be determined if you know your weight and your height.

"Using a tape measure therefore, may be a better guide to future health risks than bathroom scales," said Philippine Lipid Society president Dr. Mary Anne Lim-Abrahan.

For Filipinos, a high-risk waistline is more than 80 cm (31.5 inches) for women and 90 cm (35.43 inches) for men.

This cut-off point is shared with other Asians (except the Japanese and those from the Russian Federation), Central and Latin Americans and those from the Middle East.

North Americans have a higher cut-off point: 88 cm for women and 102 for men.

These cut-off points are based on gender and ethnic group and not country of residence.

How to measure

To know your waist circumference, place a tape measure around your bare abdomen and position it midway between the top of the hip bone and the bottom of the rib cage (this is usually at the level of the navel).

Abrahan suggested that when taking the measurement, the abdomen should be relaxed and one should be exhaling.

If your waist circumference is above the cut-off point, Abrahan said you should see a doctor to check your cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure level as part of a full cardiovascular and diabetes assessment.

Consensus among doctors

The consensus of majority of Filipino doctors regarding the issue of waist circumference resulted from a study which showed that six out of 10 primary care physicians in 27 countries recognize abdominal fat as a significant risk factor for heart disease.

The Shape of the Nations survey, commissioned by the pharmaceutical company Sanofi-Aventis and backed by the World Heart Federation, was conducted last July and studied 6,476 participants that included the general population and people at risk for heart disease.

The survey showed that while majority of primary care physicians recognize the risks of having abdominal fat, about 80 percent of the general population was unaware of its link to heart disease.

Less than one in five of patients at risk of heart diseases said they had their waists measured.

"The survey findings point to the need for more education and stronger action that target the public and those at risk for heart disease. The World Heart Day celebration will focus on preventive measures and seeks to remind this group of people of the risks leading to cardiovascular diseases," said PHA secretary Dr. Efren Vicaldo.

Cosmopolitan lifestyle

Felicidad Velandria of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) said the Philippines is grappling with obesity and cardiovascular disease problems because its population, especially those residing in highly urbanized areas, have embraced a cosmopolitan lifestyle.

She noted that results from the 6th National Nutrition Survey of the FNRI showed that based on waist-to-hip ratio, about 54 percent of Filipino women and 12 percent of men are obese.

The same study showed that abdominal obesity, characterized by an apple-shaped body, is more prevalent among females (18 percent) than males (3 percent).

"Even the younger segment of the population is not spared from this alarming trend as the prevalence of overweight among 6- to 10-year-olds increased from nearly zero in 1998 to 1.3 percent in 2003," Velandria said.

Dr. Ramon Abarquez Jr. said good health does not happen overnight.

He said: "It takes a lot of work and awareness of one's habits. People should be encouraged to work with their physicians to manage their blood pressure, stop smoking and avoid secondhand smoke, eat a healthy diet, increase physical activity and decrease sedentary activities, and manage coexisting medical conditions, like diabetes."

Cereals may help you lose weight

WOMEN WHO FAVOR CEREAL FOR breakfast tend to weigh less than their peers who choose other breakfast foods or who skip the meal altogether, according to a new study.

Whether cereal directly lends a hand in weight control is unclear, but the study authors speculate that the fiber, vitamins and minerals in many boxed cereals may play a role.

Also unknown is why the potential benefit was limited to women. Among men, neither breakfast cereal nor breakfast consumption in general had an impact on weight.

Dr. Won O. Song, of the Michigan State University in East Lansing, and her colleagues reported the findings in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association. The study was partially funded by cereal maker Kellogg.

The researchers based their findings on a US national health and nutrition survey conducted in 1999-2000. Of the 4,218 adults surveyed, 77 percent were breakfast eaters, 22 percent of whom favored ready-to-eat cereal.

Among women, those who ate cereal were 30 percent less likely to be overweight than women who skipped breakfast, even when other factors, such as exercise and total calorie intake, were considered. Women who favored other breakfast foods were similar to their breakfast-shunning peers.

It's not possible to conclude from this study that cereal, per se, helps in weight control, said Song and her colleagues. Still, they noted that compared with other breakfast eaters, cereal fans ate more fiber and less fat—a dietary pattern that has been linked to better weight control.

In addition, they pointed out, the calcium in milk, and often in cereals themselves, may be important, as research suggests that the mineral helps keep body fat in check. *Reuters*

Pain and the placebo effect

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES CONduct clinical trials not only to prove or disprove the efficacy of a new drug, but also to determine the severity of any side effects that may result from taking the medication.

To determine the efficacy of a drug, two groups of people involved in the trials: the control group that receives placebo and the experimental group, which may be divided into smaller groups so that the participants receive varying doses of the drug on trial. The efficacy of the drug during these trials can be questioned when the health of a significant population of the control group improves even though they never got the drug. This so-called "placebo effect" has long been thought to be psychological, demonstrating that belief is a powerful thing.

In the Aug. 24 issue of the journal Neuroscience, Dr. Jon-Kar Zubieta, associate professor of psychiatry and radiology at the University of Michigan Medical School, and his colleagues offer proof that the placebo effect isn't all in the mind but actually has an underlying neural mechanism.

Researchers have known for decades that the body has a natural painkiller system, in which the opioids bind to specific receptors known as mu (μ)-opioid receptors and block the transmission of the pain signal between nerve cells while releasing endorphins that alleviate pain. Opiates such as morphine target the same mu-opioid receptors and have the same effect.

Male study participants

Fourteen men between 20 and 30 participated in the study, which was composed of three separate trials.

The participants were injected with salt water solution into their jaws. They were also injected with a medication called carfentanil that was bound with a radioactive tracer so that the participants' endorphin levels could be tracked while their brains were scanned by a positron emission tomography (PET) scanner and a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine. The carfentanil can be bound to the same receptors as opioid painkillers, which makes it a good tracker.

Prior to the saline solution injections, a first set of brain images was taken as a baseline. A second set was taken when the men were not offered any medication to alleviate their discomfort. A third set was taken after they were given what they thought was medication to ease their pain and discomfort. The researchers actually gave each participant a placebo consisting of a lower-concentration saline solution.

When the placebo was administered, researchers noted that several men not only reported a reduction in their pain, they were even able to tolerate additional levels of the salt solutions injected into their jaws.

Mind-body connection

After each scan, the researchers asked the participants to assess their moods and emotions. They also studied the MRI and PET images to determine how the activity in the brain differed not only depending on how much pain the participants admitted feeling, but also how the brain responded to the pain being felt.

The images revealed differing levels of brain activity based on the participants' impression of the pain they felt. Four particular areas of the brain were noted as being involved, all of which are known to play a role in processing pain messages.

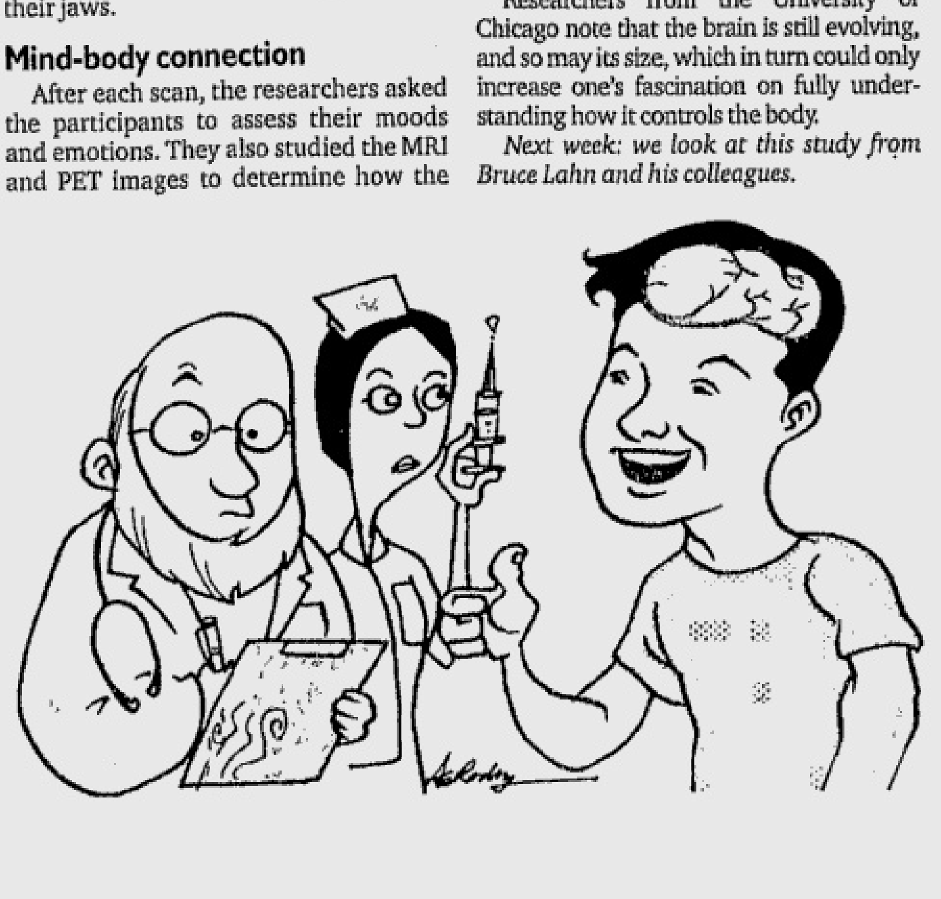
"This deals another serious blow to the idea that the placebo effect is a purely psychological...phenomenon," Zubieta said in a press release.

"We were able to see that the endorphin system was activated in pain-related areas of the brain, and that activity increased when someone was told they were receiving a medicine to ease their pain. They then reported feeling less pain. The mind-body connection is quite clear."

The study suggests the power of belief is formidable indeed, and that the brain is a complex mystery yet to be fully understood.

Researchers from the University of Chicago note that the brain is still evolving, and so may its size, which in turn could only increase one's fascination on fully understanding how it controls the body.

Next week: we look at this study from Bruce Lahn and his colleagues.



How to help children do well in math

(First of 3 parts)

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

I AM CONSTANTLY INUNdated by queries from parents and teachers on the best ways to help children do well in math. There is no magic pill to enhance math performance, but there are proven strategies to tackle this subject.

Last year, psychologist Maribel Sison-Dionisio and I conducted a study on more than 500 parents of Ateneo High School's top students, and we discovered that they believe in and practice certain common general principles, which we discussed in two books "Helping Our Children Do Well in School" and its "Companion Manual" (Anvil Publishing, 2004). Maribel and I would like to thank the Manila Critics Circle for recognizing our work with the National Book Award for Education during the Manila Bookfair two weeks ago. We also thank the Ateneo Parents Union for School and Home for their invaluable assistance in this project.

Something concrete

Included in the book are ways by which parents could help their children learn math. These strategies include:

1. **Make math concrete.** The concept of number is abstract, but demonstrating arithmetic operations with puzzles, games and toys can give the child something concrete to grasp.

My early experience with Lego sets helped me develop the concept of space, a skill required in geometry. I now encourage my 7-year-old son to do the same.

Playing with pots and pans, or putting boxes one into the other may help the child have a sense of sequence and order, basic skills needed in arithmetic. As for fractions, probably the first topic children find really difficult, demonstrate with pizza pies or slices of cake. Make sure the pieces are evenly cut.

For high school, abstraction is more often the norm. One reason children usually find the transition from arithmetic to algebra difficult is that they still do not possess adequate skills to do abstractions properly. If this is the case, there is no other choice but to present the first fundamental facts of algebra concretely.

For instance, to show your child that the sum of x and x is 2x, cut out two x's from a cardboard and show them to him. A word of caution: math by its very nature becomes abstract, and factoring, for instance, cannot be demonstrated too well concretely. In this case, a student who knows the fundamentals has an edge, and will have little difficulty with more complex stuff.

More practice

2. **Practice makes perfect.** Math skills have to be honed. The idea that one is born with instant math talent is debatable. The best students do all exercises in their textbook, and they often consult and study other books. Do not wait until the night before exams to cram concepts into your child's mind. Take concepts day by day, one at a time, and make sure the child has adequate practice on each topic.

Constant practice is perhaps even more urgent in high school. In the elementary years, the various concepts of arithmetic are repeated every school year. For instance, addition is introduced in Nursery, with numbers 1 to 10. In Prep, addition is there again, with 11 to 20 added. In Grade 1, addition is still present, this time, up to 50. In Grade 2, up to 100, and so on. The concept of addition remains the same.

The same holds for other operations and concepts. Fractions, decimals and percent come in, and cause some trouble, but they are repeated in the next year. Since practice makes perfect, a child with solid study habits learns to become quite proficient in arithmetic.

Integrated math

High school math is another matter. Algebra is different, and even when the concepts are studied again during sophomore year, most students have not really mastered the topic.

To make matters worse, there used to be integrated math (still existing in some schools), where a little bit of algebra is taught in the first quarter, then a little bit of geometry in the second quarter, then statistics in the third, then algebra again in the fourth.

The goal of integration is laudable, but effective implementation has always been a problem. I still prefer the traditional method of two solid years of algebra, then one year in geometry, then a fourth year to review algebra plus trigonometry.

We cannot do anything with the way our curriculum is structured, and I applaud the efforts of the Department of Education to streamline the subjects in school. Math is not an easy subject, but regular practice is essential.

* * *

Students and friends of Doreen Gamboa-Fernandez invite you to "Art for a Chair" where over 50 artwork by well-known artists will be auctioned off today, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. An exhibit and sale will also be held from Sept. 25 to Oct. 24 at the Triumph Building, 1510 Quezon Ave., Quezon City.

Proceeds will go to a Professorial Chair for the Humanities in honor of Doreen at the Ateneo de Manila Loyola Schools. The artwork can be viewed at www.artforachair.com. For details call 927-9750, Sol at 0906-3042343, or Lara at 426-6001 local 4089.

₱160M needed to vaccinate vs hepa B

By Tessa R. Salazar

TWO MILLION BABIES born every year need to be vaccinated as protection against the hepatitis B virus (HBV) to significantly reduce the incidence of liver cancer in the country.

To achieve 100 percent immunization among infants, the Philippine Society of Gastroenterology, Philippine Cancer Society and the Department of Health estimate that P160 million is needed to procure the needed vaccines, which would be administered in three doses over the course of a year.

The Department of Health integrated the universal infant hepatitis B immunization program into the Expanded Program on Immunization in 1992. However, there has never been 100 percent compliance.

During the first year of the program, vaccines were sufficient for only 40 percent of the target recipients. The DOH set incremental increases of 10 percent every year until all infants would eventually be vaccinated.

By 2003, the DOH had reported vaccinating only 56 percent of the target infant population.

The shortfalls of the program included the absence of catch-up immunization shots among children. In 1994, Republic Act No. 7846 was passed requiring hepatitis B immunization for infants and children below 8.

The DOH pegs the cost of each dose of HBV vaccine at P20. The vaccines are imported from India, which are purchased through Unicef to keep the cost down.

In comparison, an HBV vaccine dose administered in private hospitals can range from P300 to P500.

Causes liver cancer

Dr. Ernesto Domingo of the Philippine Cancer Society said 90 percent of liver cancer cases in the Philippines are directly attributable to the hepatitis B virus. Globally, HBV accounts for between 75 percent and 95 percent of all liver cancers.

Other probable causes include diet (consuming nuts and grains contaminated with aflatoxin), cirrhosis, hepatitis C infection and nonalcoholic fatty liver.

Liver cancer is the second most common cancer in Filipino men and the 9th most common among Filipino women.

HBV can be transmitted by a hepatitis B carrier mother to her infant, by blood transfusion, or sexual contact with a hepatitis B carrier.

Experts have noted that most HBV-infected Asians acquire the disease during childhood, either from their infected mother or from child-to-child contact in household settings.

"Since children only have a 10 percent chance of recovering completely once they are infected with hepatitis B, 100 percent of newborns should be vaccinated," said Dr. Erlinda Valdellon, chair of the council on Liver Diseases of the Philippine Society of Gastroenterology.

Treatment

Valdellon said four oral drugs are available for treatment of hepatitis B. Taking the required minimum two of these drugs would set the patient back around P60,000 a year, with the medications required to be taken from four to five years.

Choosing the injectable drug Interferon would cost P700,000 from six months to one year.

Even then, the chance for successful medication is not that good. Valdellon said the success rate for oral and injectable drugs is 40 percent.

"That's why it is cheaper to prevent the disease," Valdellon stressed.

Local production

The Philippines has the potential to produce the HBV vaccine locally. Dr. Remigio Olveda of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine said they intend to eventually produce their own vaccines. He estimated that RITM would need $10 million to produce HBV vaccines.

"We are still studying if it would be cost-effective since [imported] HBV vaccines are already [priced] low. Purchasing it may be less expensive than producing it," he said.

Dr. Albert Ismael of the Philippine Society of Gastroenterology said Myanmar is already producing its own hepatitis B vaccine. It cost the country around $13 million to be able to achieve self-sufficiency in HBV vaccines.

Bracing for the bird flu pandemic

MEDICAL FILES

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

(First of two parts).

MICHAEL MICHALAK, THE US representative to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum, recently stressed the need for Asia-Pacific countries to prepare an action plan to improve cooperation on detecting and limiting the spread of a human version of the bird flu.

Bird flu is an infection caused by the avian influenza virus. This class of virus (H5N1) occurs naturally among birds. Wild birds carry the viruses in their intestines, and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very seriously infected causing them to die. Infected birds can pass on the infection to humans.

What is worrisome is that the bird flu virus is mutating faster than our scientists could discover the vaccine that could improve a person's immunity to a particular strain. The available vaccines may no longer be effective against the mutated strains in the future.

Bird flu may present like the typical flu (fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches). However, depending on which virus caused the infection, they may also present as sore eyes, pneumonia, and other severe life-threatening complications.

"Avian flu is what we see as the next potential disaster," Michalac said during a recent visit to Manila. "What we're really worried about is if and when we do detect the pandemic, the economic effects could be severe."

The best way to survive a disaster like a bird flu pandemic wherein millions could die is to be prepared for it.

Preparation is key

"There is no doubt there will be another pandemic," Klaus Stohr of the World Health Organization Global Influenza Program said.

The difficult part is that we don't know when it will come. It could occur anywhere from next week to the coming years, the WHO said.

Even with the best-case scenario, Stohr estimates the pandemic will cause a public health emergency that will put the number of deaths in the range of two million and seven million.

Other experts are not as optimistic. They estimate that more than a billion people will be infected worldwide, with 50 million dying.

There have been three pandemics in the 20th century, and all spread worldwide within a year of being detected. The worst was the Spanish flu in 1918-1919, where as many as 50 million people were believed to have died, nearly half of them young, healthy adults.

The Asian flu pandemic of 1957 claimed nearly 70,000 lives in the United States and one million worldwide after spreading from China.

Containing the spread

What may be consoling is that a good state of preparedness to handle the pandemic should it occur can significantly reduce the mortality. The WHO says that the virus seems to have a "basic reproductive number," or R0, of between 1.4 and 2.0. This means that one case on average infects only one or two people. So if these cases are promptly detected and treated, virus spread could be contained.

Prompt containment is essential because there is a very short window period. The virus is mutating, so it's like shooting at a moving target. If not promptly kept at bay, the virus will get better and better at transmitting between humans, and the R0 will increase. Experts say that if it goes above 3, there's no chance to contain the pandemic.

Genetic sequencing of the virus samples from human cases in Vietnam and Thailand shows resistance to the antiviral medications amantadine and rimantadine, two of the medications commonly used for treatment of influenza.

There are only two remaining antiviral medications (oseltamivir and zanamivir) that may still be effective against currently circulating strains of the H5N1 virus. Even these drugs may no longer be effective in acutely infected cases in the future.

Our best bet is to develop the individual's immune system so one can naturally fight the virus. There are available vaccines but the supply is not enough in the event of a pandemic. We probably need to start stockpiling on these vaccines. The originator of the vaccine will certainly object to waiving the patent for these vaccines, but in the event of an imminent pandemic, mass production is the only means to cope with the required supply. Producing the vaccine may have to be opened to more accredited manufacturers.

E. Żobel Foundation fights TB

ENRIQUE ZOBEL WILL BE REmembered not so much as a Filipino tycoon who helped build Makati's financial district, but as an extraordinary man who sought the betterment of the less fortunate in his hometown Calatagan, Batangas. For this purpose, he established the Enrique Zobel Foundation Inc. in 1990, a year before a polo accident rendered him wheelchair-bound.

Among EZF's new projects introduced after its founder's death last year are the TB Eradication Program for schoolchildren and their families. The program was the result Operation Timbang, which showed that 61 percent of the student population in 22 EZF beneficiary schools was malnourished.

"We concluded that the possible cause of this was tuberculosis," said EZF executive director Judy Ann Kanapi.

Volunteers

Ten medical students from the University of Santo Tomas volunteered to administer the Purified Protein Derivative tuberculin test to 195 schoolchildren and 24 adults in barangays Real and Sambungan. This group was severely underweight, and therefore suspected to be infected with TB.

"We chose these areas to pilot the project since they had the highest incidence of malnutrition based on Operation Timbang," Kanapi said.

In partnership with Pediatrica Inc. which donated goody bags for the children and 25 PPD vials for 250 persons, the group conducted the test early this year.

The children and their parents were injected with a PPD extract to determine whether they had TB. After two days, test results showed that 85 schoolchildren and one adult were positive for TB.

With the help of the Rotary Club of Makati, which donated medicines for a six-month period, the infected students and the adult commenced treatment immediately.

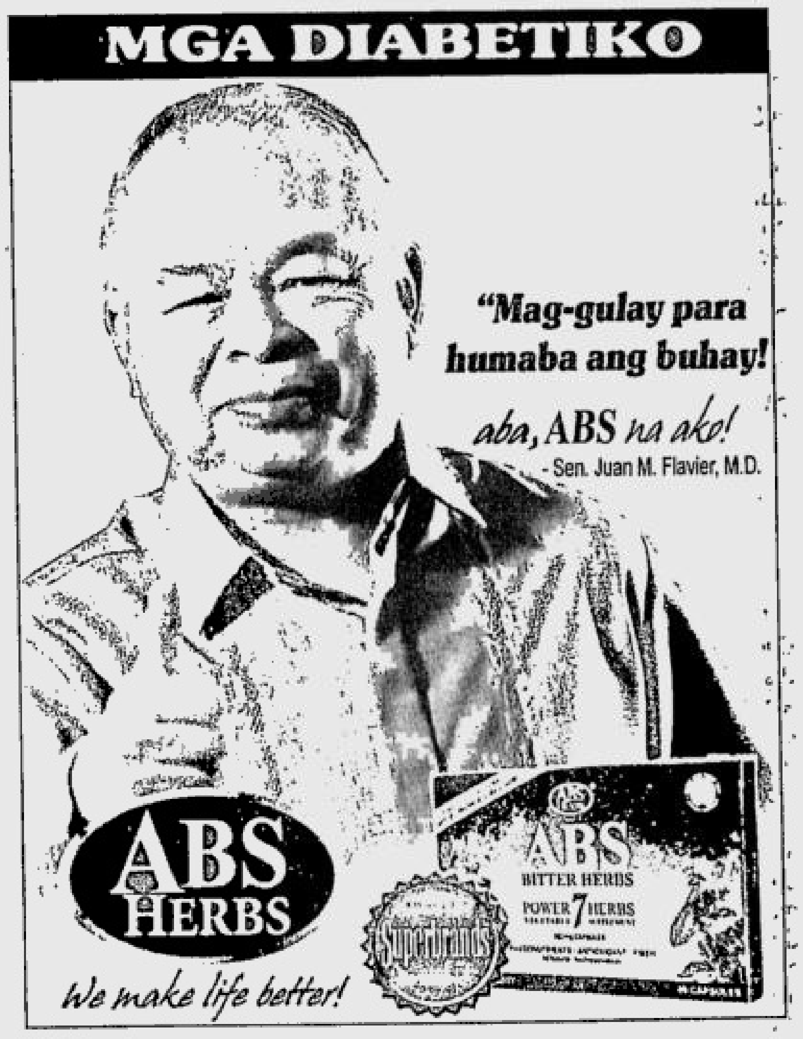
All adult family members of the infected students were further subjected to X-ray tests, using equipment provided by the SM Foundation. The results showed that they were the actual carriers of the disease, and not the children.

The Rural Health Unit of Calatagan also enrolled them in the government's Directly Observed Treatment Short-course to fight TB.

Other EZF partners in the TB program are the Ronald McDonald House of Charity, which donated toys, and the Kabisig ng Kalahi Foundation, which will donate powdered milk as supplemental food for all the children of Calatagan.

Should this pilot project become successful, the EZF will conduct a second medical mission on TB eradication next year.

MGA DIABETIKO


"Mag-gulay para humaba ang buhay!
aba, ABS na ako!
- Sen. Juan M. Flavier, M.D.
ABS HERBS
We make life better!
ABS
BITTER HERBS
POWER 7 HERBS

Study results of latest COPD bronchodilators revealed

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK—Patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) achieved superior lung function improvements when treated with the combination of two bronchodilators with different modes of action—tiotropium and formoterol—compared with the free combination of one bronchodilator, salmeterol and an anti-inflammatory, fluticasone propionate. This was shown by the results of a study presented last week at the annual European Respiratory Society congress.

"The results support the recommended order of treatment in international guidelines for COPD," said Prof. Klaus Rabe of the department of pulmonology, University Medical Center, Leiden, Netherlands, who is the lead study investigator.

Respiratory disease

COPD is a progressive respiratory disease that causes significant deterioration of lung function through air trapping during exhalation. It results in breathlessness, activity limitation and disability associated with the disease. It is now the fourth leading cause of death worldwide, claiming 2.75 million lives annually.

Bronchodilator medications, which open the airways, are considered the cornerstone of COPD treatment and guidelines recognize that combining bronchodilators with different mechanisms of action may increase the degree of bronchodilation for equivalent or lesser side effects.

Inhaled corticosteroids are recommended only for treatment of patients with severe or very severe COPD who experience repeated exacerbations. Thus, they are not considered appropriate for all patients with COPD.

In this six-week, double-blind, comparative study, 592 patients with moderate COPD were treated with either a free combination of tiotropium 18μg once daily plus formoterol 12μg twice daily or a free combination of salmeterol 50μg twice daily plus fluticasone propionate 500μg twice daily.

Greater improvements

Compared with patients receiving treatment with salmeterol plus fluticasone combination, those treated with the combination—tiotropium plus formoterol—experienced greater improvements in lung function. Their condition also greatly improved in forced expiratory volume (FEV) in one second and forced vital capacity (FVC), two indicators of COPD severity.

The average FEV in one second over 12 hours with the tiotropium plus formoterol group improved by 78 ml compared to the salmeterol plus fluticasone group (1.641L against 1.563L, $p=0.0006$). Moreover, the peak FEV improved significantly in the tiotropium plus formoterol group by 103ml (1.775L against 1.672L, $p<0.0001$).

Key measure

Trough FEV improved by 16 ml (1.509L against 1.493L, NS). FEV in one second is a key measure of lung function, while Trough FEV in one second is the measure taken in the morning prior to first dosing of inhaled medications.

The average FVC over 12 hours, the peak FVC and the trough FEV in the tiotropium plus formoterol group, improved significantly compared to the salmeterol plus fluticasone group by 173ml (3.142L vs. 2.969L, $p<0.0001$), 214 ml (3.376L vs. 3.162L, $p<0.0001$) and 79ml (2.952L vs. 2.873L, $p=0.0228$), respectively.

The significant improvements in average FEV in one second over 12 hours and peak FEV in one second demonstrate the increased efficacy of tiotropium plus formoterol as against salmeterol plus fluticasone, consistently across a range of COPD severities. The improvements were also independent of acute bronchodilator responses. Both treatment combinations were well tolerated.

HEART WATCH

Is heart disease unbeatable?

Some people seem to think that heart disease is as inevitable as death and taxes. It's not. There are a number of things you can do to avoid heart disease and stroke.

Each time you eat fatty foods and those rich in low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (a.k.a. "bad cholesterol"), fatty deposits accumulate along your blood vessels and parts of your heart, initiating plaque development in those areas. Then, a thrombus, or blood clot, is formed. If part of this plaque development is detached, this particle, an embolus, is sent swimming in the blood and it flows freely - for a while.

The embolus then travels until it can no longer do so, having gotten stuck in a much smaller part of the heart or a much narrower blood vessel. The heart now has to work double, triple time just to pump blood to body parts because much of the blood vessels are now clogged. Do you get tired easily? This is one reason why. With the stressed blood flow, there is a definite drop in the amount of oxygen available in the system. If the blockage happens in the heart, you have a heart attack. If it happens on the way to the brain, you have a stroke.

Is the condition unbeatable? No, it isn't. The situation may seem dire but a lot can still be done. While there is nothing you can do about your age and family history, you can opt for a therapeutic lifestyle change - stop smoking and drinking excessive alcohol, shift to low-saturated fat and cholesterol diet, and start exercising regularly.

There are also medications that will help lower bad cholesterol when a lifestyle change will not suffice. Statins, such as atorvastatin and rosuvastatin, inhibit production of cholesterol in the liver. Ezetimibe, a new drug developed by pharmaceutical firm Schering-Plough acts on cholesterol absorption in the intestines. Together, these two deliver a one-two punch that effectively lowers bad cholesterol levels. Schering-Plough has even gone one step further by offering the one-two punch in just one pill.

The bottom line here is very simple: realize that you may be at risk in developing coronary heart disease. Consult your doctor now to assess your cholesterol situation. Begin a lifestyle change and, if your doctor says so, take medication that will help you control your bad cholesterol. You do that, and your chances of having to suffer a heart attack or stroke diminish immensely.

A public service message from Schering-Plough

BSP move does little to aid peso

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas' fresh 25-basis-point hike in overnight rates has done little to perk up the peso, which even weakened to 56.32 yesterday before firming up at 56.225 against the US dollar.

The local currency closed only slightly stronger versus Thursday's finish at 56.245:$1 at the Philippine Dealing System, even as the US dollar weakened in Asian trade in the afternoon.

Currency traders said the BSP's increase in key policy rates for the second time this year was already discounted by the market, which in turn was weighed down by heavy corporate demand as well as other global concerns like runaway oil prices and adverse weather conditions in the US.

"The other countries have also tightened—like the US, Thailand and Indonesia—so the (interest rate) differential is thin," said a member of the Monetary Board, the BSP's policy-making body.

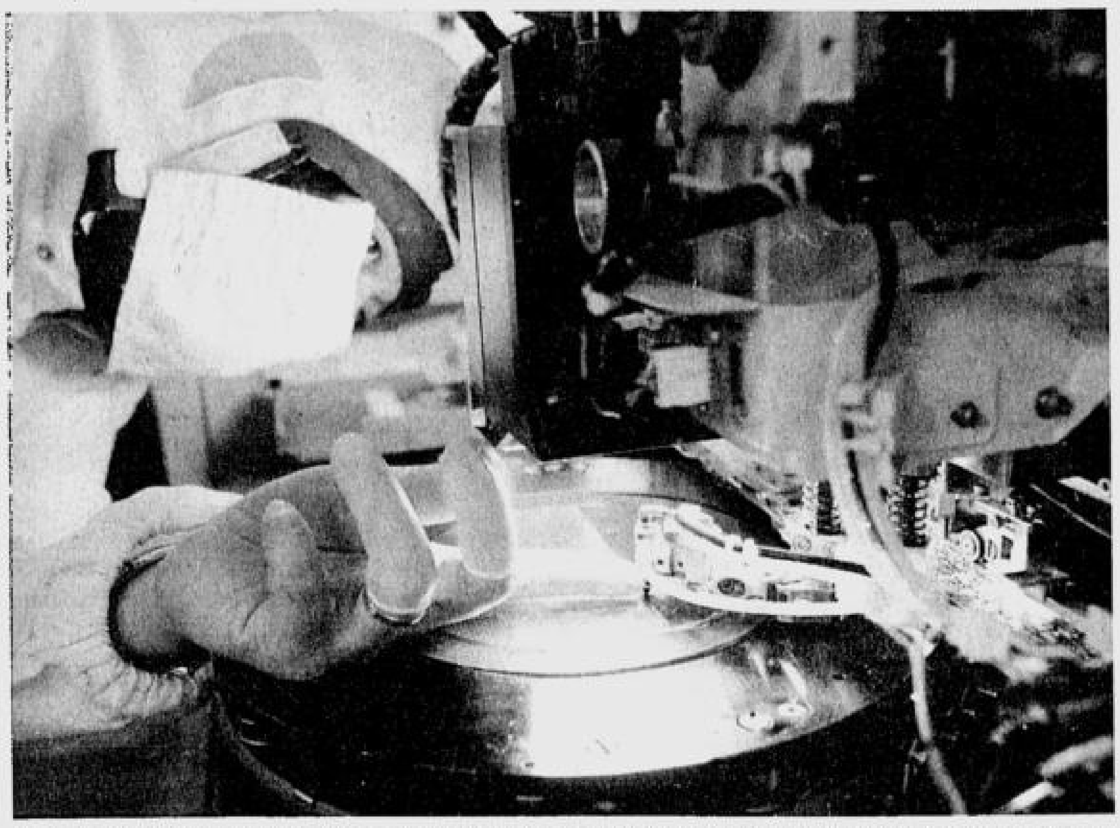
Aside from warding off inflationary pressures arising from runaway oil prices, the BSP also wanted to protect the local currency from speculative attacks, the MB source said.

The US Federal Reserve had taken a series of increases in interest rates even before the BSP did. Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said the BSP's recent hikes merely offset overseas tightening.

"There's import demand and at the same time, the US Fed has already raised its own rates, so the net effect (on foreign exchange) is zero, while external factors linger, such as high crude oil prices and disruptive weather in the Gulf of Mexico," Ravelas said.

Ravelas said the peso would likely be locked in range trading between 56.1530 and 56.30 to the US dollar next week.

He also said there was room for the BSP to further raise interest rates by at least 25 basis points within the year, possibly by November, or when the US Fed tightens its own rates again.



A MANUFACTURING technician checks the die attached to a machine at Psi Technologies Holdings Inc. The country supplies about 10 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing services needs, including mobile phone chips and micro processors. The firms based in the Philippines are now facing an increasing threat from China. REUTERS

IT ventures drive up ecozone investments by 3.5% to P32B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY projects drove up investments committed to the country's economic zones by 3.56 percent in the first eight months to P32.8 billion from P31.7 billion in the same period last year, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority yesterday reported.

For August alone, Peza said, approved projects reached a total of P5.03 billion. This was 384 percent higher than the P938 million registered from January to August of 2004.

Information technology projects accounted for almost a quarter of the August approvals at P1.13 billion. This was 232 percent higher than the investments approved in August 2004.

In the first eight months, IT-related investments reached about P5.4 billion in capital outlay, or 15.8 percent higher than the P4.8 billion posted last year.

Of the P32.8 billion worth of investments registered in the first eight months, P28.9 billion would come from locators, while P3.89 billion would be from ecozone developers.

Peza said the new locator investments that were given the go-ahead in August were expected to bring in yearly export earnings at an average of $289.5 million. The investments are expected to generate 8,851 direct jobs.

Approved ecozone projects registered since the start of the year up to Aug. 31 so far account for 20,275 new jobs, excluding those that would be created indirectly.

World Bank unit earmarks $120M for RP projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORP., the private sector arm of the World Bank, has set aside at least $120 million to fund various projects in the country beginning this year.

This is higher than the $102-million loan it committed to the Philippines during the previous fiscal year ending in June.

The allotment will be used to fund infrastructure projects. A portion will be set aside to assist housing, banking and credit-rating firms, as well as the fixed income exchange and the small and medium enterprise sector, IFC country manager Vipul Bhagat said yesterday.

The IFC has stakes in three banks. In line with its plan to consolidate its banking interests, the IFC is urging the three banks to merge, Bhagat said in a press conference.

IFC has invested 10 percent equity in Micro Enterprise Bank of the Philippines, a thrift bank in Davao.

It also has a 7.5 percent stake in Banco de Oro Universal Bank equivalent to one board seat.

In 2000, IFC invested over P1 billion in equity in Planters Development Bank. IFC and Plantersbank of the Tambunting family own Micro Enterprise Bank.

Bhagat also said that the World Bank unit fully supports the possible merger between BDO and Equitable PCI Bank, the third largest bank in the country.

During the past fiscal year ending on June 30, the IFC provided financing for five projects worth $102 million:

- $15 million went to the Cagayan Electric Power and Light Company, the country's fourth largest private electricity distribution company, serving nearly 92,000 customers in northern Mindanao;
- Some $12.5 million in loans went to Eastwood Cyber One Corp. for the expansion of its office space in Eastwood City;
- $29 million went to a special purpose vehicle, the Balikatan Housing Inc., to rehabilitate the delinquent loans of the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp.;
- $1.5 million in quasi-equity investment went to a holding company created by Paramount Life and General Insurance Company, a Filipino-owned insurance company to help the firm expand its operations; and,
- the remainder went to Filinvest Land Inc. to extend low-cost housing and mortgage financing to lower and middle income buyers.

CAP gets . . .

From page B1

ted it would be unable to service its debts as they fall due since it had more liabilities than assets. Based on its audited financial statements as of end-December 2004, CAP had P14.6 million in cash, or much lower than its total liabilities worth P4.1 billion. Its liabilities include obligations to about 174,000 plan holders worth P1.2 billion for the first semester of school year 2005-2006.

CAP had said it was not in a position to service its debts to both creditors and plan holders. It proposes under an 8-year business development plan to build up its capital to P8.36 billion and its trust fund to P14.36 billion.

CAP further said outstanding obligations to its corporate creditors and plan holders for the school year 2005-2006 accounted for the bulk of claims against it.

Its trust fund was valued at P6.75 billion as of July 31 2005. Of the amount, only P255 million or 3 percent was liquid.

CAP argued that forcing it to sell and liquidate some of its crown jewels, including the MRT bonds, at this time to meet its present obligations would result in huge losses to its trust fund.

The company blamed the following for its financial woes: the deregulation of tuition fees in the early 1990s; the effect of the East Asian financial crisis on its trust fund investments; the implementation of accounting standards that were patterned after that of the insurance industry, and the refusal of the SEC to renew its dealer's license

Cocktales

From page B3

between two competing boards, the Malacanang nominees led by Araneta have been able to continue to dominate the boards of sequestered Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. and its publicly-listed subsidiary, Philcomsat Holdings.

Even with the ouster of Estrada, Araneta, now in partnership with GMA nominee Enrique "Henry" Locsin, still holds sway over the Philcomsat Group, with their camp claiming that the recent Supreme Court decision is still "not yet final and executory."

From being an Estrada nominee, Araneta has as well resurrected as an "independent" director, presiding over the publicly-listed Philcomsat Holdings as chair.

(Editor's note: Mr. Agustin is related by affinity to the Kalaw-Ilusorio family. We have allowed the publication of this particular column in the interest of reconciliation for the Ilusorio family. This column failed to appear yesterday because of deadline constraints.)

UP Law dean ousted

THE PRO-IMPEACHMENT dean of the UP College of Law, Raul Pangalangan, was booted out Thursday by the state university's 12-member board of regents, garnering, according to the grapevine, a zero vote as against the seven obtained by his replacement, Prof. Salvador Carlota.

According to the grapevine, the private GMA counsels from Villaraza and Angangco, as well as their Sigma Rhoan fraternity brothers, lobbied the board of regents for the ouster of Pangalangan, whom they considered not only anti-GMA and a left-winger, but, despite his Harvard doctorate, also "long on rhetoric, short on practice."

Pangalangan, who writes an opinion column in the INQUIRER, was appointed dean of the country's premier law school during the Erap years by then UP president, the leftist Francisco Nemenzo. He was one of the legal advisers of Fernando Poe Jr. during the latter's failed presidential bid.

Another candidate for the deanship was former SEC Commissioner Danilo Concepcion, who allegedly received four votes in Thursday's secret balloting.

Concepcion confirmed that he indeed had been considered for the deanship, but said he had no other firm details as to how the regents voted.

At the start of the impeachment battle, Pangalangan issued an unsigned resign-GMA statement purportedly from the UP Law Faculty, only for the college to later issue a clarification that the statement was not the official faculty position.

According to the grapevine, only 20 full-time faculty members out of 57 attended the resign-GMA meeting called by Pangalangan.

Money-go-round

- THE DELGADO family has finally taken control of Verizon telecom franchise in Saipan and neighboring islands, with Jose Ricardo Delgado himself giving a pep talk to cheering employees on Sept. 21.
- THAI AIRWAYS, which has a happy problem in the Philippines with its nearly full Manila-Bangkok flights, unveiled its new logo and corporate colors at the Dusit Hotel last night and, hopefully, enticed intrepid Filipino travel agents to try the airline's new Moscow flight as well.

Heard through the grapevine

PFIZER is flexing its multinational muscle to stop the Department of Health from allowing Unilab to release a Philippine version of Viagra, which is due out next month and will sell for half the price of Pfizer's famous blue pill.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of September 23, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de oro Univ. Bank	31	31	30.5	30.5	652,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53.5	53.5	52.5	53	282,200
China Banking Corp.	590	645	590	645	3,920
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	100,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	49.5	49.5	49.5	49.5	39,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	113,800
Philippine National Bank	34	34	34	34	900
Phil. Savings Bank	33	34	33	34	4,200
Philippine Trust Co.	55	55	55	55	5,800
Security Bank Corp.	30	30	30	30	9,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	30	30	29.5	29.5	1,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	240	250	240	250	520
Manulife Financial Corp.	2820	2825	2820	2820	630
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2085	2085	2070	2070	60
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	21,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.97	2,090,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	775	775	765	770	77,440
Ipeople Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	35,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	20,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	941,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1630	1640	1630	1635	59,110
Ivantage Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	10,000
Philweb Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	6,200,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	14	13.75	14	1,600
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	21.75	21.5	21.5	326,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6	13,946,000
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.25	3.3	2,376,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1	1	1	1	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	162,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	560,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9	9	9	9	574,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	210,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	2,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	460,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.95	726,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	6,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36	36.5	35.5	36	366,900
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	41,100
San Miguel Corp. B	94	94	93.5	93.5	230,200
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	8,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.0075	0.0065	0.0075	68,000,000
Ayala Corp.	297.5	297.5	290	292.5	95,640
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	330,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	31,171,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	4,100,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.06	2.08	2.06	2.06	191,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	250,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.7	0.7	330,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	50,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	800,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	2,579,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.225	0.23	0.225	0.225	650,000
CADP Group Corp.	1	1	1	1	17,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.26	7,250,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.35	3.6	3.35	3.6	4,370,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	20,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	222,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	42	42	41	41.5	717,700
House Of Investments Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.91	0.91	40,000
Ionics Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.85	3.6	3.8	1,620,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	377,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	8,170,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	3,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.205	410,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.12	1.02	1.1	360,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	100,000
SM Investments Corp.	203	208	203	206	114,680
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.15	0.155	0.15	0.155	1,100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	150,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,020,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.28	1.34	1.28	1.34	5,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.74	0.74	150,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	950,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	100,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.54	1.56	1.54	1.56	1,210,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	510,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	14,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	299,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10	10	10	10	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref.) SerieS U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series AA	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,500
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	5,000
Far Eastern University	600	600	600	600	4,430
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.9	8	7.9	8	7,986,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.93	1,230,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	1,600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	2,520,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.32	1.34	784,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	310,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	1,470,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	250,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	22,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	5,007,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.98	1.06	0.96	1.06	670,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.99	1.08	0.99	1.08	420,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	7,000,000
Atlas Cons Min & Dev't	6.2	6.2	5.9	6.1	2,300,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	2,470,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	710,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	47,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	29,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	13,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	2,130,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28	374,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	250,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	6,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	23,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	88,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	430,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	158,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	50,000

'05 BOP surplus

From page B1

the economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

The current account records trade in goods and services as well as cash transfers, such as from migrant workers.

For the full year, the BSP expects a current account surplus of $1.59 billion, up from $1.1 billion in the first semester. However, the capital and financial account is seen to post a lower surplus of $303 million, as against the $1.5 billion surplus in January to June.

The BSP reported that electronic exports declined marginally in the second quarter to reach $6.6 billion due to the transfer of a major company's high-end product manufacturing line to China. Despite this, exports of electronic products posted a 1.2-percent growth for the six-month period on higher exports of semiconductor devices and components.

The favorable BOP developments led to the increase in the BSP's gross international reserves, including the reserve position in the International Monetary Fund, to $17.7 billion as of end-June, up by 9.2 percent from the end-December 2004 level of $16.2 billion.

CURRENCIES

September 23, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.823045	1.000000	56.2810
Japan	Yen	0.007366	0.008950	0.5037
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473909	1.790800	100.7880
Hongkong	Dollar	0.106060	0.128863	7.2525
Switzerland	Franc	0.643255	0.781555	43.9867
Canada	Dollar	0.703097	0.854263	48.0788
Singapore	Dollar	0.489529	0.594778	33.4747
Australia	Dollar	0.627751	0.762718	42.9265
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.183202	2.652590	149.2904
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.219444	0.266624	15.0059
Brunei	Dollar	0.488077	0.593014	33.3754
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000098	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.020054	0.024366	1.3713
UAE	Dirham	0.224105	0.272287	15.3246
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.215000	68.3814
Argentina	Peso	0.282610	0.343371	19.3253
Brazil	REAL	0.360700	0.438251	24.6652
Denmark	Kroner	0.134040	0.162858	9.1658
India	Rupee	0.018791	0.022831	1.2850
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218372	0.265322	14.9326
Mexico	New Peso	0.075961	0.092293	5.1943
New Zealand	Dollar	0.571758	0.694686	39.0976
South Africa	Rand	0.129747	0.157642	8.8722
Korea	Won	0.000801	0.000973	0.0548
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024869	0.030216	1.7006

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P2,284/m² Vic 8903461 Loc 27

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development No. 3
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RESEARCH AND MEDICAL CENTER
Cabanatuan City

ANNOUNCEMENT

As of September 15, 2005 Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center, a 400 bed capacity teaching and training hospital, located at Mabini Street, Cabanatuan City is in need of the following doctors, (Medical Officer III).

Department	No. of doctors needed
1. Surgery	6
2. Medicine	2
3. Anesthesia	2
4. Ophthalmology	2
5. Orthopedics	2
6. Pediatrics	1

Interested applicants may contract any of the following:

1. Dr. Allan J. Sanchez
   OIC-Chief of Professional Services
   Tel. Nos. (044) 463-1607; 0917-7906388
2. Mr. Mario P. Abergas
   Administrative Officer V
   Tel. Nos. (044) 600-0927/0928 - loc. 146
3. Mrs. Evangeline P. Ruanto
   Chief Administrative Officer
   Tel. Nos. (044) 463-8286; 0917-8037010

You may also fax your curriculum vitaé at telefax no. (044) 463-9937, 463-1607 and 463-8286.

(Sgd.) HUBERTO F. LAPUZ,
MD, MHA, FICS, FPCHA
Officer-In-Charge

(PDI - Sept. 24 & 25, 2005)

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

SPC DISPOSAL COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Notice is hereby given that the Security Plant Complex, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will sell/auction dismantled building materials/facilities, unserviceable armored vehicle truck, equipment such as kitchen equipment, Clark Forklift, compressors, press ironing, band saw and platform scale, grinding machine and other scrap materials thru sealed bids which must be received by the SPC Disposal Committee not later than 10:00 a.m. on 3 October 2005 at Room 504, 5th Floor, Building A, BSP Security Plant Complex, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Interested parties may inspect the said items during regular working days from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at the BSP Security Plant Complex before 3 October 2005.

Auction forms and other information may be obtained from the SPC Disposal Committee's Executive Officer, Mrs. Rouena L. Rosal at Room 405, 4th Floor, Building A, BSP Security Plant Complex, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Tel. No. 920-2003.

(Sgd.) ORLANDO B ASIDDAO
Chairman

(PDI – Sept. 24, 2005)

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1Hour Car Loan 9153460
2%w/o taking car 6560140

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081/82

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2% w/out taking car 7262780

2% w/out taking car 5315577

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Cresencia Ignacio Santos who died on June 27, 2005 has been extra judicially settled by her heirs in an extra judicial settlement executed before Porfirio M. Bautista of Paranaque City on September 23, 2005 and entered in his Notarial Register as Doc# 172, Page# 35, Book # I, Series of 2005.
(PDI-Sept.24,Oct 1&8, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Metro Manila Development Authority
PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION COMMISSION

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Project: *Pasig River Environmental Management and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program (PAREMAR)*
Loan No.: *Asian Development Bank (ADB) Loan No. 1746-PHI*
Description of Works:
Construction and Development of (A) Plaza Mexico and Escolta Ferry Stations; (B) Guadalupe and Valenzuela Ferry Stations; and (C) Sta. Ana Ferry Station.

1. ***The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from the ADB toward the cost of PAREMAR and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the Contract for (A) Plaza Mexico and Escolta Ferry Stations (Contract No. EPA-LPP-027); (B) Guadalupe and Valenzuela Ferry Stations (Contract No. EPA-LPP-028); and (C) Sta. Ana Ferry Station (Contract No. EPA-LPP-029).***
2. The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) as the executing agency now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the following contract package:

Contract Package	A. Const. and Devt. of (1) Plaza Mexico and (2) Escolta Ferry Stations	B. Const. and Devt. of (1) Guadalupe and (2) Valenzuela Ferry Stations	C. Construction and Development of Sta. Ana Ferry Station
Contract No.	EPA-LPP-027	EPA-LPP-028	EPA-LPP-029
Area	395.32 sq.m.	442.32 sq.m.	284.58 sq.m.
Location	(1) Plaza Mexico, Intramuros, Manila; (2) Muelle Del Banco Linear Park, Escolta, Mla.	(1) J.P. Rizal St., Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati; (2) Bonifacio St., Brgy. Valenzuela, Makati	Sta. Ana Linear Park Brgy. Punta, Manila
Contract Duration	120 Calendar Days	120 Calendar Days	120 Calendar Days
Project Description	Construction and development of Plaza Mexico and Escolta Ferry Stations which includes the following items of work: construction of temporary facilities; earthworks; civil works, steel works, architectural works; roofing works; sanitary/plumbing works and electrical works	Construction and development of Guadalupe and Valenzuela Ferry Stations which includes the following items of work construction of temporary facilities; earthworks, civil works, steel works, architectural works; roofing works; sanitary/plumbing works and electrical works	Construction and development of Sta. Ana Ferry Station which includes the following items of work: construction of temporary facilities, earthworks, civil works; steel works, architectural works, roofing works sanitary/plumbing works, revetment works and electrical works

3. Interested Bidders shall secure the Bid Documents and submit bids as follows:

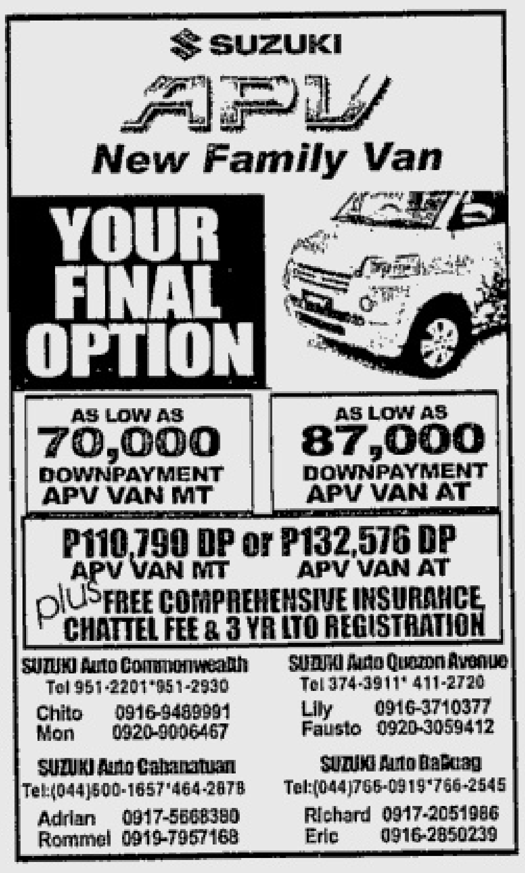
Activity			Date	Time	Venue	Remarks
Securing of (a) Eligibility Checklist or (b) submission of Letter of Intent and purchase of complete set of Bid Documents upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php 12,500.00			Fr. 24-30 Sept. 2005	8:00 AM to 5:00 AM	PRRC, 2F, MWSS, Eng'g. Bldg., Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City 1105	Eligibility checklist is free of charge
Securing of additional eligibility information (if any) and inspection of Bidding Documents.			Fr. 24-30 Sept. 2005	8:00 AM to 5:00 AM	PPRC, 2F, MWSS, Eng'g. Bldg., Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City 1105	For those who secured only the Eligibility Checklist
Pre-Bid Conference		Contract Package A	4 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM	PRRC, 2F, MWSS, Eng'g. Bldg., Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City 1105	
		Contract Package B	4 Oct. 2005	2:00 PM		
		Contract Package C	5 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM		
Site Inspection	Contract A	Plaza Mexico Ferry Station	4 Oct. 2005	2:00 PM	Plaza Mexico, Intramuros Manila	
		Escolta Ferry Station			Muelle Del Banco Linear Park, Escolta, Manila	
	Contract B	Guadalupe Ferry Station	4 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM	J.P. Rizal St., Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City	
		Valenzuela Ferry Station			Bonifacio St., Brgy. Valenzuela City	
	Contract C	Sta. Ana Ferry Station	5 Oct. 2005	2:00 PM	Sta. Ana Linear Park, Brgy. Punta, Manila	
Deadline for Submission of Bids		Contract Package A	17 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM	PPRC (same address as above)	Late bids shall not be accepted
		Contract Package B	17 Oct. 2005	1:00 PM	PPRC (same address as above)	Late bids shall not be accepted
		Contract Package C	18 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM	PPRC (same address as above)	Late bids shall not be accepted
Opening of Bids		Contract Package A	17 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM	PPRC (same address as above)	Bids shall be opened in the presence of the bidders
		Contract Package B	17 Oct. 2005	1:00 PM	PPRC (sames address as above	Bids shall be opened in the presence of the bidders
		Contract Package C	18 Oct. 2005	8:00 AM	PPRC (same address as above)	Bids shall be opened in the presence of the bidders

1. The DOTC shall be the implementing agency of the Contract.
2. Bidding (Eligibility Check / Prequalification, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract) shall be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Act," to the extent it is consistent with Asian Development Bank's procurement procedures and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in "*Guidelines for Procurement Under Asian Development Bank Loans*".
3. PRRC-IABAC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at anytime prior to Contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **Bingle H. B. Gutierrez**
Executive Director, PRRC

(Sgd.) **Agustin R. Bengzon**
Undersecretary, DOTC
Chairperson, Pasig River Ferry Service Project

Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission
2F, MWSS Engineering Bldg. Katipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City 1105
Tel. Nos. 433-3444 and 433-3446 • Email Address: prrc@tri-isys.com • Fax No. 926-6444
(PDI – September 17 & 24, 2005)



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Adrian 0917-5668380
Rommel 0919-7957168

SUZUKI Auto Baliuag
Tel:(044)766-0919*766-2545
Richard 0917-2051986
Eric 0916-2850239

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The public is warned that **CRISTINA D. TALENJALE, MAGNOLIA L. PADERNAL** and **ALBARITO M. ROGADOR, JR.** are no longer connected with **GOLDRICH CAR ACCES., INC.** and **GOLDCARS AUTO ACCES., INC.** of Banawe Street, Quezon City for violation of company rules including handling of funds and stocks. Any transaction entered into for and in behalf of both companies shall not be honored.
(PDI – September 24, 2005)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

SEC MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 5
Series of 2005

TO: ALL CORPORATE SECRETARIES OF PHILIPPINE CORPORATIONS

Section 17.2 of the Securities Regulation Code, provides that a corporation that possesses the following attributes

(a) Has assets worth at least Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00),

(b) Has minimum of two hundred (200) stockholders; and

(c) The stockholders own at least one hundred (100) shares each,

Must comply with certain reportorial requirements.

As part of that obligation, secretaries of corporations that meet the foregoing criteria (also known as "public companies") are thereby directed to advise the Commission in writing, .not later than November 30, 2005 of that fact and the date the said status was attained.

The same information shall, together with other data, be disclosed in the audited financial statements due for submission in 2006 and succeeding years.

This Memorandum shall take effect immediately.

September 19, 2005, Mandaluyong City Philippines.

(Sgd.) **Fe B. Barin**
Chairperson

(PDI-Sept. 24, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation
Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Interested suppliers/bidders are invited to apply for the following:

Specifications	Approved Budget	Bidding Fee
1. Janitorial Services	P 2,170,698.84	P 2,000.00

Interested bidders must not be related to the head of the entity or any member of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) or BAC Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Prospective bidders may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from the BAC Secretariat office, 4th Flr. Estuar Bldg., 880 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City after payment of a non-refundable bidding fee. For any inquiry, please call BAC Secretariat at Tel. 374-8710 or 374-8514.

Pre-Bid Conference	Submission of Bids	Opening of Bids
Oct. 11, 2005	On or before Oct. 24, 2005	Oct. 25, 2005

The BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **ALEXANDER B. BUTIC**
Chariman, BAC

(PDI - Sept. 24 & Oct. 1, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Bldg. #6, SAN LAZARO COMPOUND, RIZAL AVENUE,
STA. CRUZ, 1003, MANILA, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (632) 743-8301 LOCAL 1650-1652; Web address: www.doh.gov.ph

September 14, 2005

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. *The Department of Health (DOH), through the Government of the Philippines invites consulting firms to participate in the selection of Firms for the following. Bids receive in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of the financial proposals.*

No.	PROJECT	ABC	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS
1	Technical Assistance and Assessment Teams on Sentrong Sigla, Level 2 Standards (IFB-CS-GOP-2005-13 [1])	Php 2,000,000.00	Php 1,000.00
2	Client Satisfaction Study for DOH Health Regulation Agencies (IFB-CS-GOP-2005-14 [1])	Php 3,000,000.00	Php 1,000.00

2. The *DOH* now calls for the submission of *Letters of Intent (LOI)* from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and shortlisting for the *above consulting service*. Interested consultants must submit their LOIs on or before September 28, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. at the *address indicated below* and secure the Eligibility Documents there from. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished eligibility documents shall be on October 14, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at *the COBAC Conference Room*. Only those that are short listed will be entitled to submit bids.
3. The COBAC shall draw up the short list of consultants from those who have submitted *LOIs* and have been determined as eligible both in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A). The short list of prospective bidders shall consist of *three (3) to seven (7)* consultants. The criteria and rating system for short listing are applicable experience (40%), qualification of personnel (40%) and current workload (20%).
4. *LOIs* must be delivered by hand, through mail, or facsimile to the address below at *9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.* on or before *September 28, 2005.*
5. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184 only bids from short listed consultants will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in the eligibility documents. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 the contract will only be awarded to the Highest Rated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

   The DOH shall evaluate bids using the *Quality-Cost Based Evaluation (QCBE) with 60/40 weight in favor of technical.*
6. Interested consultants may obtain further information from the *COBAC Secretariat: Ms. Coney Liberan/Ms. Debbie Rabi* at the address given below from *10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.*
7. The contracts shall be completed within a *maximum period of twelve (12) months.*
8. The *Department of Health* reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Contact Info:
Ms. Concepcion Liberan/Ms. Debbie A. Rabi, COBAC Secretariat
Address: 3/F Building 6, DOH, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila 1003
Tel. No.: 743-8301 local 1650 - 1652
E-mail Address: csliberan@co.doh.gov.ph
Fax No.: 741-9775
Website: www.doh.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **ALEXANDER A. PADILLA**
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, COBAC

(PDI - Sept. 17 & 24, 2005)

MANILA GAS CORPORATION (MGC)
INTER-ISLAND GAS SERVICES INC. (IIGSI)

INVITATION TO PUBLIC BIDDING

MGC/IIGSI announces the re-bidding of its Paco and Cebu properties through sealed public bidding. The submission of bids is scheduled on October 05, 2005, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the NDC Audio Visual Room, Penthouse, NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. The bids will be opened at 2:00 p.m. on the same date.

1. Paco Properties

NORTH PROPERTY		SOUTH PROPERTY	
Located on Sanciangco St., Paco Manila		Located at 1536 Paz Guazon St., Paco Manila	
TCT No.	Area	TCT No.	Area
34304	2,608.20 sqm	39480	536.80 sqm
33924	2, 231.40	39482	2,239.00
33924	7,431.20	39482	1,727.73
		25165	502.00
		25165	34,990.00
	12,270.80 sqm		39,995.53 sqm

2. Cebu Property - located along the Barangay Road, barangay Opao, Mandaue City

TCT No.	Area
18998	2,128.00 sqm
18999	9,529.00
	11,657.00 sqm

Interested parties may secure the Bidding Package from MGC c/o Ms. Ellen Paracale at the 7/F NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City with tel. no. 8404838 loc. 223 & 313/Fax No. 8404862 and IIGSI c/o Mr. Charlie Villegas, 3215 District 5 Sangi, Barangay Pajo, Lapu-Lapu City with tel. no. 032-3418874. A pre-bidding conference will be held on September 26, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the NDC Audio Visual Room, Penthouse, NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City.

The sale of the above properties shall be strictly on **CASH-AS-IS WHERE-IS BASIS.**

MGC/IIGSI reserves the right to reject any and all bids, or to waive any of the formalities required, or to accept only such bids which are deemed advantageous to MGC/IIGSI.

(PDI- Sept. 22, 23 & 24, 2005)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY WATER DISTRICT
263 Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City
Tel. Nos. 433-2408, 433-5032, 433-6802
Fax No. (48) 433-6803

AMENDMENT OF INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Puerto Princesa City Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : **Construction of 800 cu.m. Concrete Ground Reservoir**
Location : **Manalo cor. Lacao St., Puerto Princesa City**
Brief Description : **Construction of 800 cu.m. Concrete Ground Reservoir**
Approved Budget For the Contract (ABC) : **Five Million Two Hundred Forty-Eight Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Two Pesos and Forty Two Centavos (P5,248,632.42)**
Contract Duration : **Ninety (90) Calendar Days**

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at 263 Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa City, upon their submission of an LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of One Hundred Pesos (P100.00) to the PPCWD Cashier, Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

Bidders who submitted Letter of Intent stand and is honored.

The schedule of BAC activities as originally incorporated in the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid and published on September 7, 2005 and September 14, 2005 in the Philippine Daily Inquirer shall be observed and all documents already submitted by Interested Bidders before the publication of this amendment are considered as duly submitted.

The BAC will issued Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) to the PPCWD Cashier.

The PPCWD assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) Engr. **VICENTE D. ABREA**
PPCWD BAC Chairman

(PDI - Sept. 24, 2005)

EXHIBITS TRADE CUTTING
VP Noli de Castro cuts the ceremonial ribbon formally opening trade exhibits at NREA's 10th National Convention and Trade Exhibits at the SM Megatrade Hall. Assisting VP de Castro are organizationman and NREA national president Jose V. Manalad (beside VP) and board chairman Nestor S. Manglo. Others in photo are NHA GM Federico Laxa, Architectscope publisher and UAP past president Ric Poblete, association vice chair Rey Carpio, presidential adviser Dante Liban, EVP Andy Mañalac, sec. gen. Nene Estrada and Trustee Rolly Liao.

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OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Funeral Home and Crematory
845-2334 to 38; 845-2440

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

ERNESTO (JUN-JUN) PEREZ PROSPERO, JR.

Peacefully joined our Creator on September 22, 2005 at the age of 34.

His loving mother **Violeta**; **Maritel** and **Oscar**; **Allan Jude** and **Jo**; niece **Alana** and nephew **Joseph**, request the pious readers, friends and relatives to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, September 27, 2005 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Bauihinia Chapel.

Our Dearly Beloved *"Mama Loy"*

CONSUELO V. VENTURINA

of Pasig City and San Jose City, N.E.

Peacefully joined our Creator
on September 22, 2005 at the age of 86.

Her husband **BEN**; children **EDGAR** and **MYRNA**, **CORA** and ELMO Braganza, **GANI** and CHARI, **CELIA** and JIMMY Guzman, and **CYNTHIA** and CHITO Villar; grandchildren Dennis (+), Elvin, Kate and Alan Cayetano, Cindy, Charissa, Cheryl, Kristine, Courtney, Vanessa, JC, Christian, Jerome, Jacelle, and Corinna; brothers, sisters, in-laws, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at
Memorial Chapel A of Christ the King Parish,
Greenmeadows Avenue, Q.C.

Interment will be on Tuesday, September 27, 2005,
at the Holy Cross Memorial Gardens in Novaliches, Q.C.
after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate;
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS •
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

SALUD CABALLERO ORATE

of Burdick Way, San Jose, California, USA

Peacefully joined her Creator on September 20, 2005 at the age of 83.

Her bereaved children **Elizabeth, Edgar, Philip, Christina, Adela, Dante, Grace, Robert** and **Florence**; sons-in-law and daughters-in-law; grandchildren and great grandchildren; her sisters **Angela** (†), **Lydia, Fe, Rufina, Josie, Aida**; niece,nephews and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul and to remember her always in their prayers.

Her remains lie in state at Oakhill Memorial Park in San Jose, California.

Interment in the USA will be announced later.

CLASSIFIEDS

Trans Co

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION

South Luzon, Operation & Maintenance

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

Rehabilitation of Famy-Infanta 69kV T/L (Phase 1)

Brief Description:

The proposed project is located in Laguna Province, South Luzon Region. The work contemplated to be done by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all superintendence, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment and other incidentals necessary for the complete replacement/rehabilitation of existing 69kv woodpoles transmission line structure with direct burial steel pole structures including dressings, groundings, overhead ground wires and guying and anchor assembly in accordance with the requirements of the Plans and Specifications.

[TRANS-05-RFI69-EG-11]

The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*, through the Internal Cash Generation (ICG) intends to apply the sum of ***Eleven Million Two Hundred Ninety Eight Thousand Three Hundred Forty Three Pesos and 20/100 (Php 11,298,343.20)*** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Rehabilitation of Famy-Infanta 69kV T/L (Phase 1)***. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM* now invites potential Bidders to submit Letter of Intent (LOI) and apply for eligibility for the ***Rehabilitation of Famy-Infanta 69kV T/L (Phase 1)***. Bidders should possess a valid ***PCAB license*** with ***License Particular of at least: "Category B, Specialties"*** and ***Registration Particular of at least: "Medium A, Electrical Works (Power Transmission and Distribution)"***, respectively, have completed a similar contract involving supply of all labor, materials, supervision necessary for the ***construction, installation and rehabilitation of high voltage transmission lines.*** The value of which should be at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility documents. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of eligibility documents shall be on the same date of the opening of Eligibility documents: ***October 4, 2005, 1:00 P.M.*** at the address mentioned in the next succeeding paragraphs. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Document. Completion of the works is required by ***ninety (90) working days.***

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only bids from Bidders who passed the eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall secure the Eligibility documents from the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below, starting ***September 16, 2005 - 30, 2005 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.*** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***Php1,500.00.*** They shall submit their accomplished Eligibility documents on or before ***October 4, 2005, 1:00 P.M.*** at the stated address. Eligibility Screening shall be held on ***October 4, 2005, 1:30 P.M.*** at the OAVP Conference Room B of the stated address.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*** *Regional Contracts Management Office (RCMO)* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from ***8:00 A.M.*** to ***5:00 P.M.*** on ***October 26-28, 2005.***

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee ***Php 4,000.00.*** The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative starting ***October 26 - 28, 2005, 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.***

The ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on ***November 4, 2005, 9:00 A.M.*** at the OAVP Conference Room Transco, SLOM San Vicente Biñan, Laguna.

Deadline for submission of bids is on ***November 17, 2005, 9:00 A.M.*** at the address below. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the prescribed form indicated under Section 27.2 of R.A. 9184. Bid opening shall be on the same date, ***November 17, 2005, 9:30 A.M.*** at the ***OAVP Conference Room B of Transco SLOM.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

The ***NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION-SLOM*** reserves the right to accept or rejct any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation - South Luzon Operations & Maintenance
Regional Contracts Management Office (RCMO)
San Vicente Biñan, Laguna 4024
Mr. Reynaldo B. Vergara – BAC Chairman
(02) 981-4576 to 78 local 4086; 4094, 4053
rbvergara@transco.ph
(02) 981-4576 to 78 local 4007
www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) **REYNALDO B. VERGARA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI—Sept. 24, 2005)

LETTER TO SHAREHOLDERS

24 September 2005

To All Shareholders of Apex Mining Co., Inc. ("Apex"):

Please be informed that, on 23 September 2005, Mapula Creek Gold Corporation ("Mapula Creek"), a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines, and Crew Gold Corporation ("Crew Gold"), a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Yukon Territory of Canada, filed the Tender Offer Statement (SEC Form 19-1) with the Securities and Exchange Commission in connection with Mapula Creek's intention to acquire ONE HUNDRED TWENTY MILLION TWO HUNDRED SIXTY THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED SEVENTY TWO (120,260,972) Class "A" Shares and Crew Gold's intention to acquire EIGHTY FOUR MILLION FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY SIX THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED FOUR (84,486,204) Class "B" Shares of Apex, the aggregate amount of which is equivalent to approximately twenty seven and 13/100 percent (27.13%) of the total outstanding capital stock of Apex, at sixty seven and 24/100 centavos (0.6724) per share, to be paid by check payment in accordance with the Terms of the Tender Offer. As of August 24, 2005, the total outstanding capital stock of Apex consists of SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY FOUR MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTEEN THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED THREE (754,713,703) shares, divided into FOUR HUNDRED FIFTY EIGHT MILLION NINE HUNDRED EIGHTY ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTEEN (458,981,818) Class "A" Shares and TWO HUNDRED NINETY FIVE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTY ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTY FIVE (295,731,885) Class "B" Shares (collectively, the "Shares").

Shareholders as at 26 September 2005 (the "Record Date") may tender all or a portion of their Shares for acceptance and purchase by Mapula Creek or Crew Gold, subject to the Terms of the Tender Offer, beginning at 9:00 a.m. of 26 September 2005 until 5:00 p.m. of 21 October 2005 (the "Tender Offer Period").

Tendering shareholders should obtain a copy of the Application to Tender Class "A" Shares/Class "B" Shares and secure validation of their stock certificates by Apex's Corporate Secretary, Mr. Leonardo S. Gayao, at Ground Floor, Brickville Condominium, 28 N. Domingo Street, New Manila, Quezon City. Thereafter, the shareholders should accomplish and submit the Application to Tender Class "A" Shares/Class "B" Shares in duplicate, together with other requirements set forth therein, and tender their corresponding stock certificates to Union Bank of the Philippines (the "Depository") at [3rd Floor SSS Makati Building, Ayala Avenue, corner Rufino Street, [Attention Moises L. Almanon, Jr. with tel. nos. 8938584/ 8920011 loc 2353).

At any time before 5:00 p.m. of 21 October 2005, Mapula Creek or Crew Gold shall, at its sole discretion, have the right to reject or accept any Application to Tender Shares which is not completed in full or which lacks any of the required attachments. The Depository will accept the Application to Tender Shares on behalf of Mapula Creek or Crew Gold on the condition that the Applicant has been certified by Apex's Corporate Secretary as a shareholder of Apex as of 26 September 2005 and that the signature/endorsement on the Apex stock certificate(s) matches the signature on file with the Apex Corporate Secretary.

Mapula Creek or Crew Gold shall be deemed to have accepted for payment all Shares validly tendered and not properly withdrawn when it gives a notice of acceptance to the Depository.

Payment for the Shares so accepted is deposited with the Union Bank of the Philippines (the "Paying Agent"). Check payments to tendering registered shareholders of the Shares shall be made available by the Paying Agent for pick-up by the tendering registered shareholders within ten (10) business days from the end of the Tender Offer Period (the "Payment Date").

Tendering beneficial owners of the Shares are advised to consult with their custodians, fiduciaries, or other similar agents in relation to the manner of collecting payment from such agents.

In any event, no payment shall be made without the Depository having timely received the duly accomplished Application to Tender Shares, the duly endorsed and validated stock certificates evidencing the Shares and other documents required therein.

Any payment not collected within thirty (30) calendar days from the Payment Date shall be dispatched, via registered mail, to the recorded address of the tendering shareholder at the risk of the latter.

Tendering shareholders shall have the right to withdraw any tendered Share(s) at any time during the Tender Offer Period. For a withdrawal to be effective, a written notice of withdrawal must be received by the Depository before 5:00 p.m. of 21 October 2005.

The Tender Offer is further subject to the terms and conditions described in the Terms of the Tender Offer. Copies of SEC Form 19-1, the Terms of the Tender Offer and the Application to Tender Shares, may be obtained by the shareholders of Apex, free of charge, from the following:

Union Bank of the Philippines
3rd Floor SSS Makati Building
Ayala Ave. cor. Rufino Street
Makati City

Attention: Moises L. Almanon, Jr.
8938584/8920011 loc. 2352

Mapula Creek and Crew Gold confirm that sufficient resources are available to satisfy full acceptance of the offer to tender the Shares.

NOTE: YOU MAY CONSULT YOUR LEGAL AND/OR FINANCIAL ADVISER OR DIRECT YOUR INQUIRIES OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION TO THE DEPOSITORY.

(Sgd.) **Atty. Leo Cleto A. Gamolo**
As President of Mapula Creek Gold Corporation
And
As the Authorized Representative of
Crew Gold Corporation

(PDI - Sept. 24, 2005)

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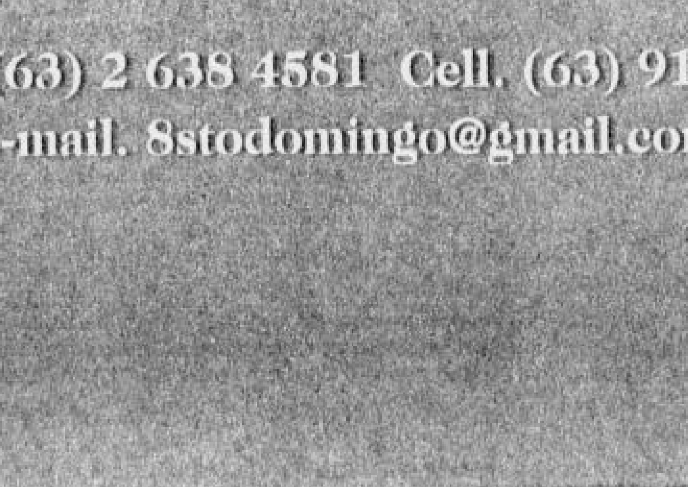
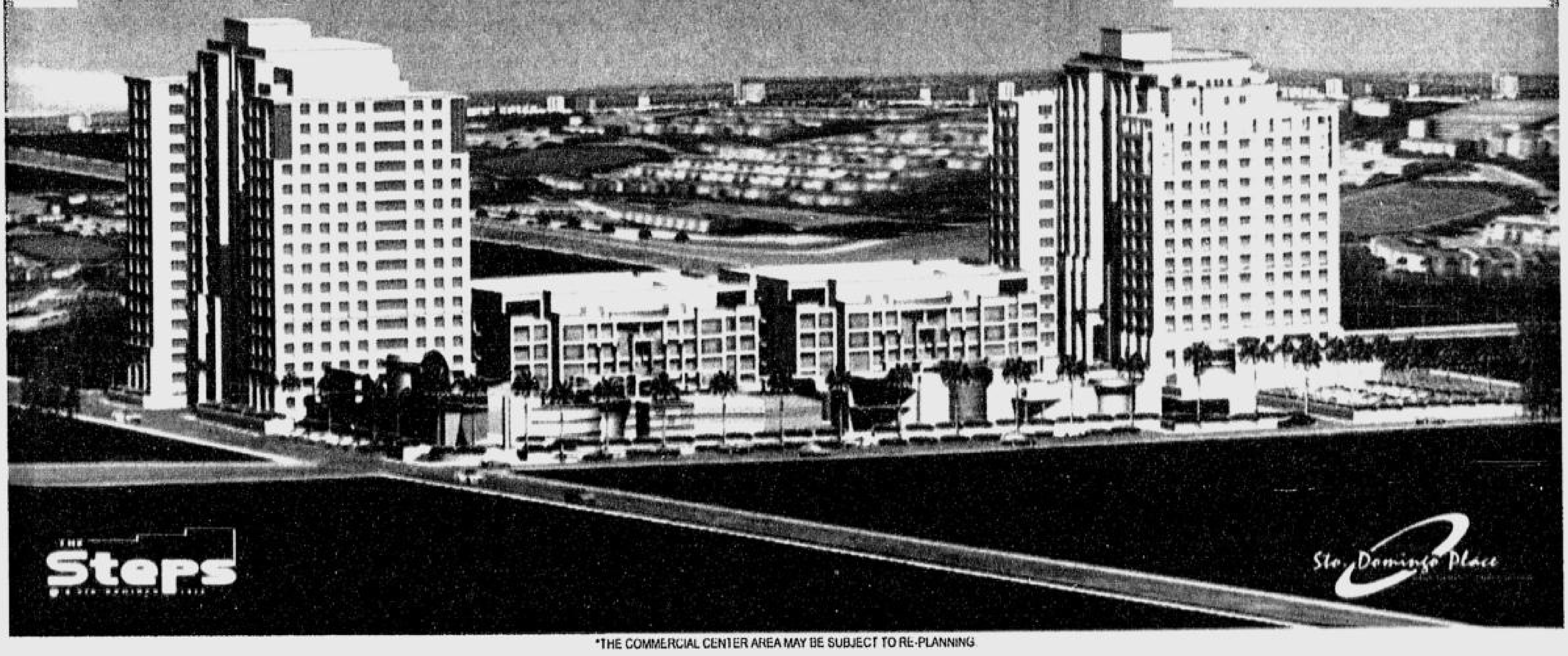

Don Manuel
Sto. Domingo
Biak Na Bato
Calamba
Steps

Telephone. (63) 2 638 4581 Cell. (63) 918 924 0577
E-mail. 8stodomingo@gmail.com

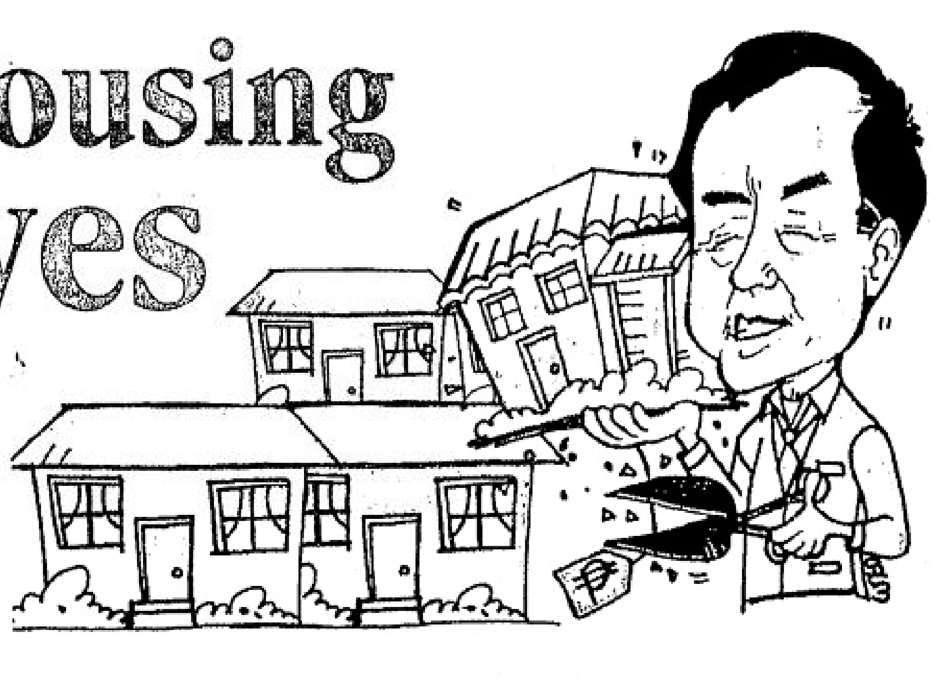

The Steps
Sto. Domingo Place

*THE COMMERCIAL CENTER AREA MAY BE SUBJECT TO RE-PLANNING

PROPERTY

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Noli seeks to uplift housing with several initiatives



By Charles E. Buban

THE COUNTRY'S REAL estate developers now have more reason to push through their projects.

Vice President Noli de Castro recently announced the approval of exemption of real estate transactions from the coverage of the expanded value-added tax (EVAT) law.

"The sale of residential lots valued at P1.5 million and below as well as house and lot and other residential units valued at P2.5 million and below are now exempted from the coverage of the EVAT law," said De Castro during the recently concluded Subdivision and Housing Developers Association-Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council national developers convention held in Bacolod City.

The Vice President, who also chairs the HUDCC, believes this will help developers who are now reeling from an increasing cost of materials and labor.

Passed on to buyers

"I trust that these savings from the exemption will be passed on to homebuyers through lower prices, or better quality of houses," he told the members of SHDA, the largest organization of real estate developers in the country.

The Vice President also reveals HUDCC is now in close coordination with the Bureau of Internal Revenue for the necessary adjustments in the application of creditable withholding tax.

"SHDA earlier forwarded a recommendation to retain the 1.5 percent level for housing packages amounting from P300,000 up to P1.2 million; 3 percent for packages amounting between P1.2 million and P2.5 million; and 7 percent for those above P2.5 million.

Furthermore, De Castro reminded the developers that the HUDCC has already raised the loan ceiling for socialized housing from previous P225,000 to the present P300,000.

He also added that HUDCC will also look into other measures proposed by developers during the two-day convention held on Sept. 15 to 16.

In welcoming these announcements, SHDA president Willie Uy said the savings will generally hasten the production of houses, especially now that the current estimated housing backlog is between 3.7 and 4 million units.

"Housing is a major industry that can be utilized as an instrument for pump-priming the economy. Studies show that the multiplier effect of housing is at least 16.7 percent of the gross national product as there are at least seven to 10 manpower requirements in building a house as well as there are at least some 60 direct industries attached to housing," Uy revealed.

He thanked De Castro for HUDCC's continuing collaboration. "With the population growing at an average 2.4 percent annually, this country needs some 650,000 new units a year to satisfy overall housing needs," said Uy.

Assured housing funds

De Castro also assured funds for housing will be ready and available for all partner developers.

He reported that for this year, Pag-Ibig Fund has set aside P22 billion worth of funds for housing and another P28 billion for next year.

"The HUDCC is also working to further streamline the processes related to housing. As the lead agency for the sector, we are now coordinating efforts with Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to speed up the processing of environmental clearance certificates for housing projects by limiting the number of environmentally critical areas and shortening the list of requirements for applications," De Castro revealed.

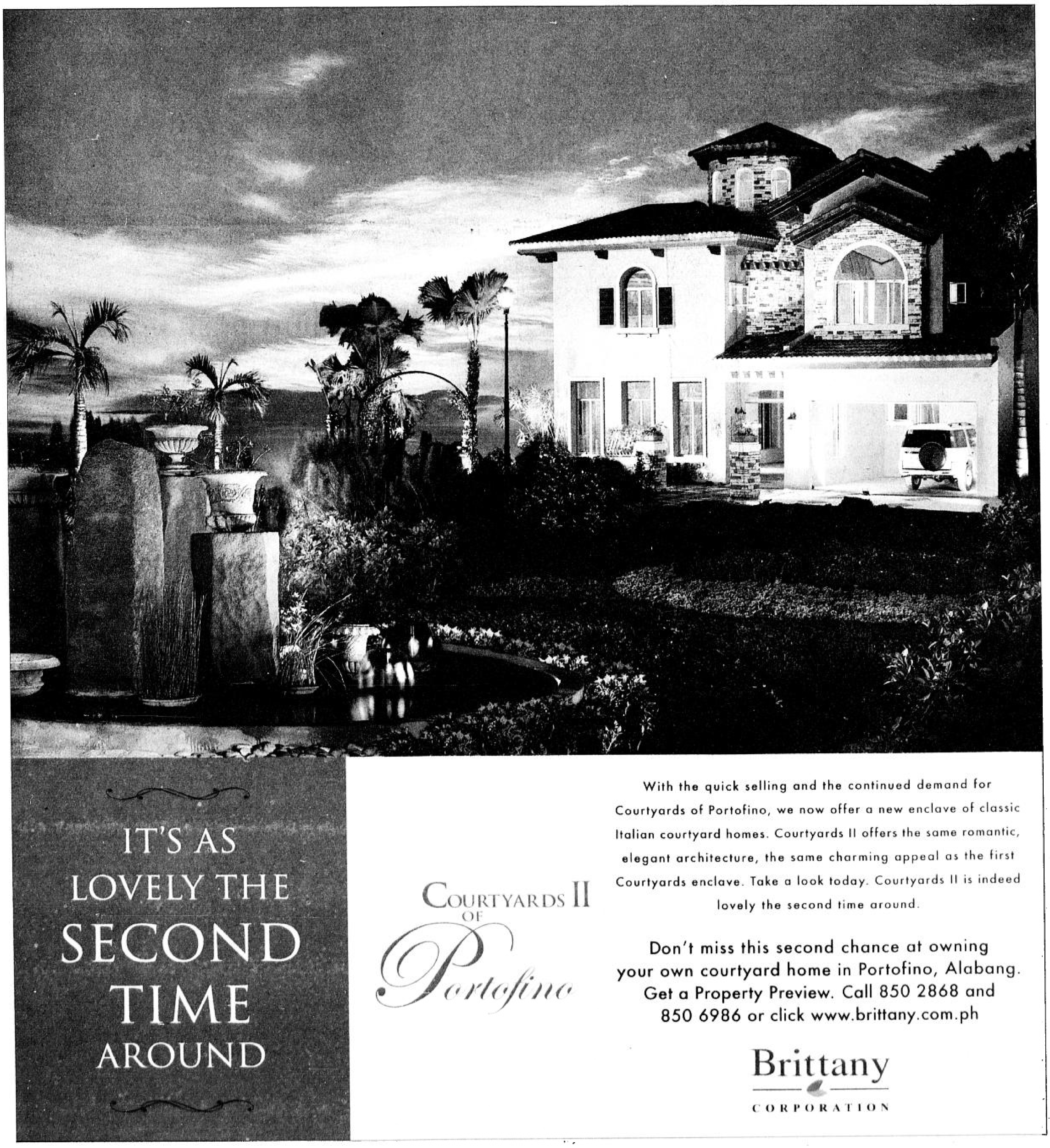
Bring down requirements

The Vice President adds that Defensor is now looking at bringing down requirements for the environmental impact study applications to just two.

"The Vice President also called our assistance to help draft a bill that would convert Executive Order 45 into a law, to further eliminate other hindrances to the speedy processing of housing permits that would require amending various laws," said SHDA chair Marilu Alferez.

EO 45 prescribes time periods in the issuance of housing permits and clearances, as well as provides sanctions for failure to observe the same.

Alferez added that with the support of all the agencies involved in housing, developers will be able to help HUDCC finalize its version of EO 45 in time for the shelter month scheduled in October.



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Brittany
CORPORATION

Life cycle analysis for green buildings and materials

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

EVERY BUILDING PRODUCT manufactured affects the environment in some way. Raw materials that are grown and extracted also affect the land. As the materials are processed and manufactured, their distribution uses up energy and land and so a building material creates waste during all these stages until it is disposed of. Life-cycle analysis (LCA) is a way to determine the effects of a building product on the environment over its lifetime.

Life-cycle analysis involves several stages:

- material extraction and processing
- manufacturing
- distribution and packaging
- product use
- end of product life

At each of these stages there are inputs of energy, raw materials and land use, while there is also an output of waste. Output can also include pollution, ozone depletion and global warming.

How is life-cycle analysis used?

Designers who want to promote sustainable products can analyze the environmental qualities of products over their lifespan.

Life-cycle analysis was originally conceived to assess the cost and environmental implications of different patterns of human behavior. It was also done in response to increased environmental awareness on the part of the public, industry and governments.

Life-cycle analysis is a powerful tool that can assist regulators to formulate environmental legislation, help manufacturers analyze their processes and improve their products to enable consumers to make more informed decisions in the selection of building materials.

In many advanced countries, manufacturers are now becoming more aware of their environmental responsibilities. "Green" products are now clearly labeled for the environment-conscious buyers. This is now a growing trend that will continue to prosper as more people patronize green products.

Environmental criteria and green architecture

Life-cycle analysis is consistent with green architecture principles. The following are some environmental criteria for life-cycle analysis of building materials:

- **Product life**

The longer a product lasts before replacement, the better it is in environmental terms.

Life-cycle analysis supports the concept of maximizing the building's longevity. To achieve this, the building must be designed to allow for future changes in its use. In the United States, Wal-Mart's Eco-Mart in Kansas, was designed so it can be converted into housing after the building's commercial life is over.

- **Resource use**

Materials should be made from renewable materials that are biodegradable and less energy-intensive to produce. These materials include products that reduce environmental impact during construction, renovation or demolition. One example is leased carpeting. Leased carpeting is now the trend in many countries. The carpet manufacturer merely leases the carpet. When the lease expires, the carpet is not disposed of in landfills. Instead it is cleaned, rehabilitated and upgraded to be reused again.

- **Embodied energy**

The building industry gives more importance to the price of a construction material rather than the energy used to manufacture it. This article advocates a new perspective with embodied energy in mind.

This "embodied energy" in a construction material or assembled component is the energy needed to grow, harvest, extract, manufacture, transport, construct or produce a building product.

To illustrate, a pound of aluminum has about 80 times as much embodied energy as a pound of wood. Adobe too, has very low embodied energy, but if it needs to be transported 1,000 kilometers, this advantage is offset.

Measuring the embodied energy of a material is a very effective way to measure its environmental impact. A material with high-embodied energy means the product was produced with a lot of energy from its extraction to its disposal.

- **Recycling/recyclability**

Recycling prolongs the life of the resource while reducing energy consumption and pollution caused by manufacturing from new materials.

In construction, reinforced-concrete frames have about the same embodied energy as steel, but it is less recyclable at the end of its useful life than steel. Structural steel can be recycled and reused in practically its original use, whereas concrete can be reused mostly as rubble.

Construction materials should be selected based on their ability to be easily disassembled and reused. In the building industry, this is called "deconstruction." It means designing construction details to allow building components to be easily maintained and replaced. Deconstruction also allows a building, at the end of its lifespan to be the resource for the next structure.

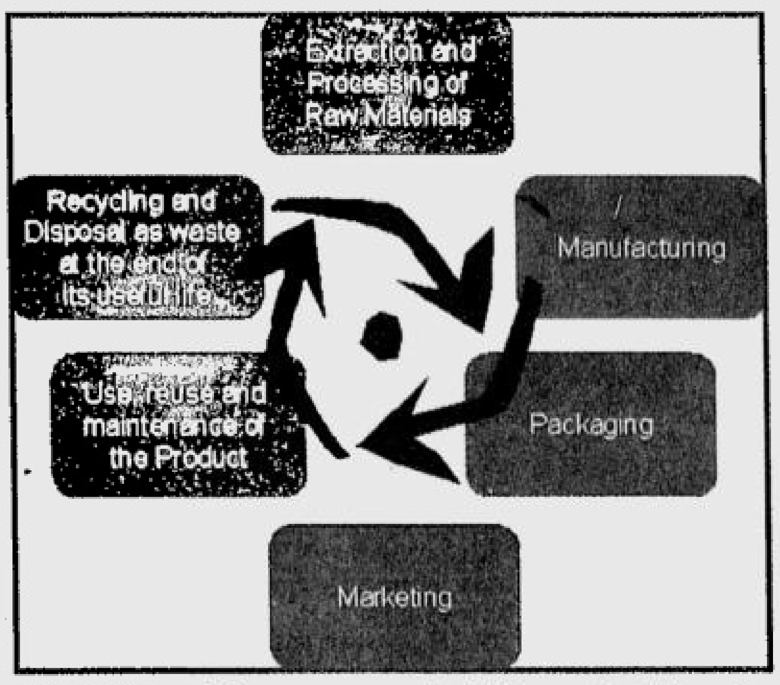
Salvaged materials can also be obtained from renovation projects. These materials are beneficial because they save natural resources and minimize waste. Some salvageable materials are lumber, plumbing fixtures and other hardware.

- **Material efficiency**

Material efficiency means using strong materials in one area to cut down on materials in other areas. An example is using structural building components as finish materials. This system can reduce costly building material like exposed concrete columns, beams and metal deck ceilings.

In deciding what material to use in a particular building, no single evaluation can give a definitive answer. Remember to consider all the issues, including life-cycle analysis and costing to ensure the best overall choice for the building and of course for the environment.

(The author is the chair of the board of judges of the Asean Energy Awards 2005 and is a practicing green architect. For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.)


Extraction and Processing of Raw Materials
Manufacturing
Packaging
Marketing
Use, reuse and maintenance of the Product
Recycling and Disposal as waste at the end of its useful life

LIFE-CYCLE analysis compares a product's life span, durability and structural efficiency as it goes through the different stages of its development from extraction of raw materials to its disposal.

SOURCE: WORLD RESOURCE FOUNDATION

Developers join reg'l realty congress

THE PHILIPPINE CHAPTER OF THE International Real Estate Federation (Fiabci) will join the Asia-Pacific real estate congress (Aprec) with the theme "Urban Renaissance and Real Estate Industry" on Sept. 28-30 in Osaka, Japan.

While in Japan, the Philippine delegation will hold a series of project presentations and property expositions in Tokyo and Osaka starting Sept. 25. The Tokyo event will coincide with the Family Day in Shinkiba, Tokyo, while Philippine property will be exhibited and Filipino groups will gather at Osaka congress venue.

Florentino S. Dulalia Jr., president of Fiabci Philippines-International with Editha L. Manansala, Aprec Philippine delegation committee president, said Fiabci Philippines intends to reach out to the numerous overseas Filipinos in Japan acquiring decent homes for their families in the Philippines, and to drum up interest among the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

RP delegation

The delegation will be led by Dulalia, chair Victorio V. Soliven, vice presidents Editha L. Manansala, Arsenio M. de Guzman Jr., Robert Marie C. Sy, Pedro C. Tario, architect Felino A. Palafox Jr. and Purita R. Soliven, president of the Creba International Foundation.

Other industry members may join. Palafox will talk on the present and future of the Philippine property industry during the congress.

Participating developers and professionals include V.V. Soliven Group of Companies, F.S. Dulalia Realty, Duraville Realty and Development Corp., Starland Properties Inc., Federal Land Inc. and Haus-Land Assets Realty.

The Philippine delegation is backed by the Pag-Ibig Fund, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) and Japanese Embassy. For inquiries, parties may call (632) 668-1257 or (632) 929-2731 or +639178335866.

The exciting architecture of Villa Sta. Monica

PICTURE LIFE IN HISTORIC LIPA, with its well preserved ancestral homes, religious convents and quiet, bucolic groves. And yet, you can have all the modern conveniences and amenities of a masterplanned, fully functional and efficient community.

That's life in Lipa, particularly at Villa Sta. Monica.

Laguna Properties Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of Ayala Land Inc., develops homes and communities for affordable but comfortable living, has spun Lipa into a dream estate with Sta. Monica, a place to come home to and settle in to enjoy the different tempo of country life with superior amenities.

Villa Sta. Monica is part of a 95-hectare development project of LPHI in Lipa, Batangas, that also includes the adjacent Hacienda Sta. Monica, a farm-lot estate that beckons to harried urbanites to live "clean and green" and take up a new lifestyle.

Dream home

Villa Sta. Monica is for those looking to build their dream home in Lipa, Batangas and become part of a closely-knit, thriving community in a place where they can feel both proud and secure.

Model houses were recently put up to give lot owners ideas for their own units. The architectural theme is Asian Tropical, based on indigenous structures in Asia, which has synthesized local and foreign elements and integrated them into the tropical climate.

Strong and simple lines predominate. Neutral hues and earth tones are played off against each other and balanced off with greens to blend visually with the natural landscape of Lipa. Two-toned concrete tiles are used on the roof to simulate the original native thatch roof so popular in this setting.

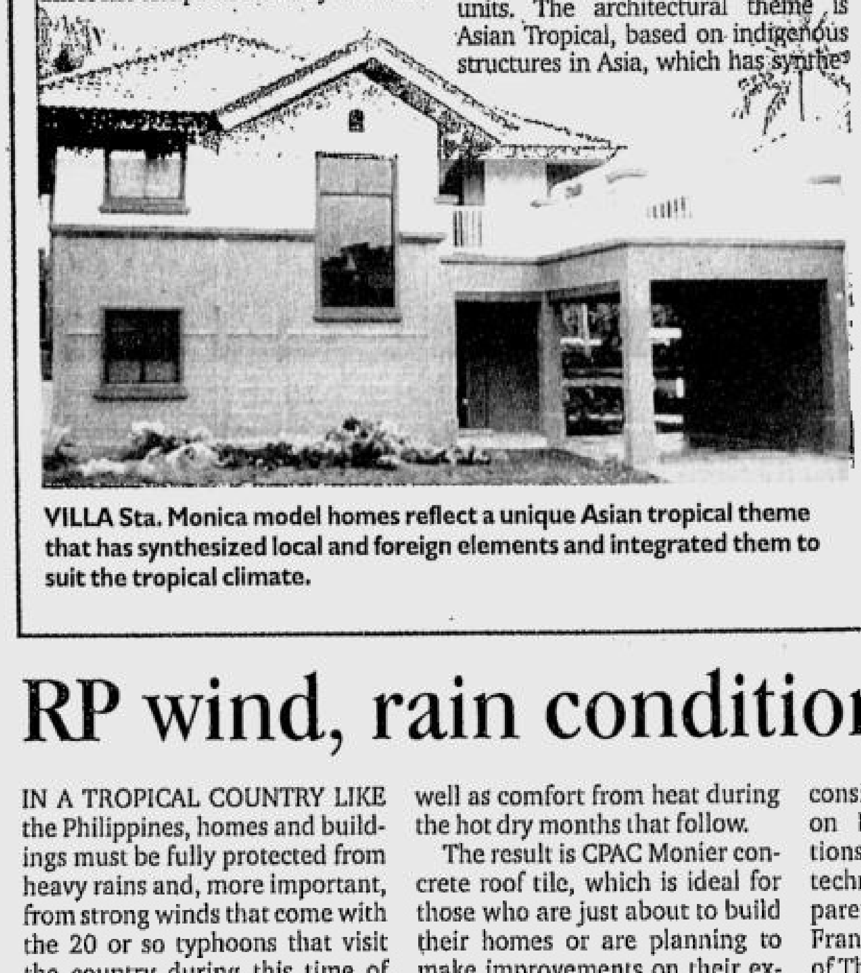
The same modern-native ambience is replicated in the entrance landmark, the guardhouse and the clubhouse.

Project concept

The concept for this project was the place itself, says LPHI architect Gerard P. Ortiz. "Since the Philippines is an agri-country where 'bayanihan' and 'planting rice' are everyday occurrences, we created an interplay of Filipino farming and tropical architecture and applied it to the modern setting."

Said Ortiz: "Not many developments nowadays employ the beauty of Asia's architecture. And not many have tapped the roots of our Filipino culture in building modern homes that are efficient and functional, yet provide us a sense of comfort and innate familiarity. This was the challenge and the inspiration for us architects at LPHI," Ortiz said.

For more information on Villa Sta. Monica, call (02) 864-5744 or visit www.lphi.com.ph.



VILLA Sta. Monica model homes reflect a unique Asian tropical theme that has synthesized local and foreign elements and integrated them to suit the tropical climate.

UNVEILING the marker for the Harald Ulbrich Bridge in Claveria, Misamis Oriental are, from left, Claveria Myor Paul Douglas Calingin, Waagner Biro Philippines president Helmut Wuzela, Misamis Oriental Rep. Augusto Baculio and Austrian consul Harald Ulbrich.

Multimillion-peso bridge named after Austrian consul

THE MUNICIPALITY OF CLAVERIA IN MISAMIS Oriental has honored an Austrian consul by naming a newly completed bridge after him, becoming the second Austrain national to be accorded such recognition by Philippine officials.

Claveria Mayor Paul Douglas Calingin and Vice Mayor Lorenzo Ong signed Resolution 42 naming a 50-meter bridge in Barangay Aposkahoy in Claveria as the Harald Ulbrich Bridge. This is in honor of Consul Ulbrich who was instrumental in providing multimillion-peso funding assistance for the project in collaboration with Rep. Augusto Baculio (second district, Misamis Oriental) and Waagner Biro Philippines Inc., a Vienna-based bridge construction firm.

"The honorable consul, Harald Ulbrich, is the first Austrian national to set foot in the municipality of Claveria and become a good friend of our people. He has been instrumental in making this very important bridge a reality and it is but proper that we name the bridge after him," Mayor Calingin said.

The bridge was constructed under the President's Bridge Program Phase 2 by the Department of Interior and Local Government using the modular steel truss materials supplied by Waagner Biro Philippines.

'Genuine interest'

Baculio cited Ulbrich for his "genuine interest" in the development of the countryside.

"In the five years that Consul Ulbrich was assigned to the Philippines, he has made several trips to Mindanao, to Misamis Oriental and to Claveria. He made many friends, including myself, as he has gone out of his way to determine how he and his government can help achieve progress in the outlying areas of the country."

Ulbrich came to Manila from Buenos Aires, Argentina just to attend the inauguration of the bridge and renew his ties with the people of Claveria and Misamis Oriental.

The bridge was one of the more than 400 bridges Waagner Biro built in the Philippines directly or by supplying the materials under the DILG program and the Austrian-assisted Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Bridge Construction and Replacement Project.

Waagner Biro and the DPWH are also set to formally open to traffic the nearly completed 30-meter bridge in Barangay Dumarao, Roxas, Palawan, one of the three pilot bridges constructed by Waagner Biro for DPWH using the permanent modular steel truss design that offers flexibility of modular construction and installation.

For mountainous location

The bridge is ideal for the mountainous location of Claveria as it offers versatility in configuration and is adaptable to various local and environmental conditions. It is also very easy to maintain and has minimal maintenance cost, engineering experts said.

Philippine officials also credited Waagner Biro for making a "significant impact on the Philippines' social and economic growth through its vigorous participation in the government's infrastructure program."

Waagner Biro, which has been in the Philippines since 1996, mainly uses modular steel truss frames, and has established an international track record for superior design, durability and strength, backed by 150 years of experience in the steel industry and in utilizing modern technology in bridge construction.

RP wind, rain conditions factors in concrete roof tile design

IN A TROPICAL COUNTRY LIKE the Philippines, homes and buildings must be fully protected from heavy rains and, more important, from strong winds that come with the 20 or so typhoons that visit the country during this time of the year.

With such weather conditions in mind, CPAC Monier Philippines Inc. endeavored to develop roofing materials that can provide better and reliable protection from strong winds and heavy rains during the rainy days, as well as comfort from heat during the hot dry months that follow.

The result is CPAC Monier concrete roof tile, which is ideal for those who are just about to build their homes or are planning to make improvements on their existing roofs.

Careful consideration

Engineer Anthony Quijano, production manager of CPAC Monier Philippines Inc., said they designed CPAC Monier's concrete roof tiles with careful consideration of all relevant data on Philippine weather conditions and utilizing the latest technology provided by CMPI's parent companies, Lafarge of France and Siam Cement Group of Thailand.

"We forwarded all these weather data to our technical center based in Germany for them to be able to determine the wind loading for our concrete roof tiles. We also took into consideration rain penetration based on the annual driving rain index in the development of our concrete roof tiles," he said.

From the results of all these studies, Quijano said CPAC Monier Philippines then adopted a wind-tunnel testing to ensure that all CPAC Monier concrete roof tiles pass the most rigid performance tests against leaks and strong winds.

Said Quijano: "Based on our extensive research, we were also able to determine the most appropriate tile-fixing methods and roof construction to provide our customers the highest quality products and services so nobody needs to worry about leaking or flying roofs, which are common during typhoons when using other materials in the Philippines."

Extensive investments

The company's extensive investments in product development as well as quality control has resulted in CPAC Monier Philippines' concrete roof tiles emerging as the preferred choice not only of homeowners and architects in the country but of big developers as well, propelling the brand to the No. 1 spot in the local market.

A joint venture between Lafarge of France and the Siam Cement Group of Thailand, two world leaders in the roofing and construction business, CPAC Monier Philippines produces over a million concrete roof tiles monthly in its state-of-the-art production facility in Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

Nostalgic Fil-Ams planning to come home for good

By Charles E. Buban

AFTER 28 years of working in the United States, Janneth Sebastian, a registered nurse and her now retired husband Leonardo, are finally thinking of coming home.

Despite the success and the good life Janneth and Leonardo are enjoying—having a home in Shoreline, Washington—they still yearn to come home to the Philippines. Both their daughter are already grownup. Their eldest daughter has her own career while the other daughter continues her studies while having a job.

It all started when the couple, in one of their regular visits to the Philippines, learned about Plaza Crest, an exclusive community being developed by DO Plaza Estates Inc. (Dopei) in Parañaque City.

Right space

"It's just the right space for us in a very private and exclusive neighborhood," Janneth describes the 66-sq-m penthouse-type (two-bedroom) luxury walk-up condominium that they bought for $72,000 (P4 million).

The 2.7-hectare Plaza Crest community will offer three types of residential units of varying sizes to suit the needs of residents. Apart from the walk-up condominium, there is also four-level Garden Villas with floor areas ranging from 190 to 218 sq m and the three-level townhouses with floor areas ranging from 145 to 164 sq m.

Dopei VP for operations Joseph Edralin reports that they already sold 60 units or about a third of the planned 154 units inside Plaza Crest, thanks to a successful marketing road show (amounting to $7.8 million or P438.4 million) in several US cities in the West Coast, the Mid-East and East Coast.

3M Filipinos

"There are nearly 3 million Filipino immigrants to the United States who are homesick so they are always on the lookout for exciting developments," says Edralin.

Dopei's marketing partner in the United States, the Philippine Property Center, estimates that these Filipino-Americans, consisting of early immigrants who are nearing retirement age and successful middle-aged professionals and self-employed individuals, have over $52 million (P2.9 billion) in funds that could be invested in several real estate developments in the Philippines.

"What made Plaza Crest particularly attractive to Filipino Americans is the development's secured environment, strategic location and countryside ambience," describes Edralin.

Secured

Security and privacy at Plaza Crest is ensured by the property's three-meter high perimeter fence, . security cameras at the entrance gates, and with only 154 residential units, community population is kept at the minimum.

Its location in Parañaque City also puts Plaza Crest within a short drive from the airport (both international and domestic) as well as several first-rate medical, commercial, entertainment and business establishments of neighboring cities of Makati, Muntinlupa and Pasig.

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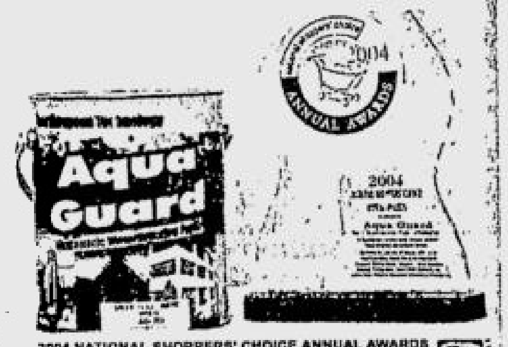

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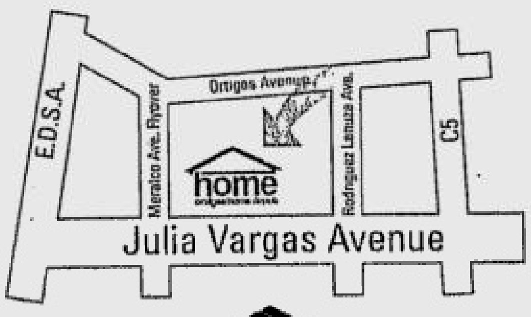

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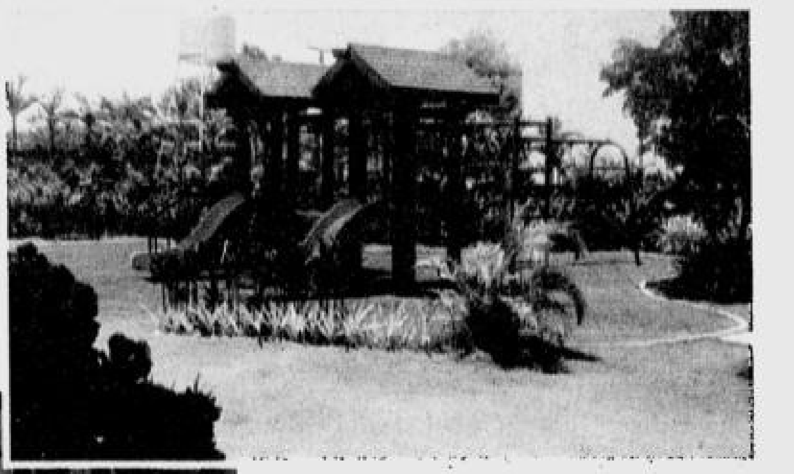
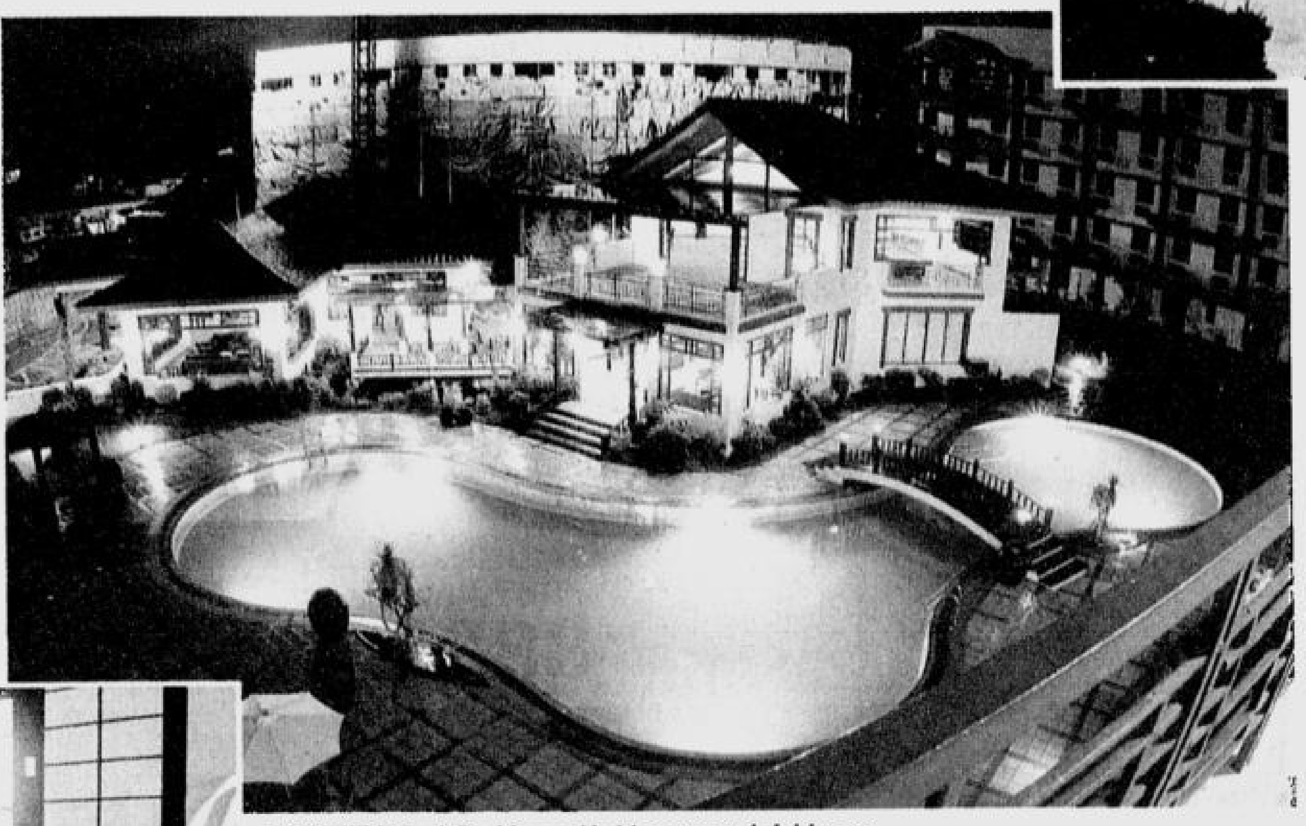
New condo concept redefines city living



PLAYGROUND



MAYFIELD Park Residences' bridge way and clubhouse

THE AUDIO-VIDEO family KTV room

ESCAPING THE STRESSFUL URBAN environment is almost impossible if one's home is in the heart of the bustling metropolis, but this is not quite so in a place in Pasig City, where a residential project has redefined city living through a condo-resort development.

This unique residential concept has taken shape in Mayfield Park Residences, which was designed and developed by DMCI Homes to give city living a dose of nature and a refuge from stress.

Right at the center of this modern condominium complex is a sanctuary of Asian orientation—the clubhouse—a two-part structure composed of a two-level main building and a single-story extension, showcasing nature in a seeming spa setting.

Looking very much like an authentic Japanese teahouse in its white, brown and gray-textured façade and imported Shinto roof tiles from Japan, the clubhouse sits like a poignant central temple of Zen.

The main entrance is accentuated by cascading waterfalls believed to wash away stress and start the process of rejuvenating both body and spirit.

A koi pond beneath a suspended wooden bridge between the two clubhouse structures brings these rejuvenation and refreshing features to a deeper level.

'Comfort zone'

Similarly designed to foster harmony with nature all throughout, the clubhouse furniture, accessories and accent pieces are of earth-toned colors and natural materials, creating a captivating ambience of peace and ease. The cozy rattan sofas and elegant Malaysian-wood coffee and console tables make the lounge literally a "comfort zone."

Reeds from Benguet make up the materials for the ceiling, accent doors, and walls, while hanging pagoda parchments and capiz tea candleholders adorn the ceiling and tables at the dining areas.

Large Shoji windows present a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape, creating an undisrupted feeling of oneness with nature so as to sustain the rejuvenation process.

Rock garden

Between the main structure and the extension of the clubhouse lie the rock garden and ara-al stone path, both can be seen from the clubhouse balcony or from the Shoji windows.

The rock garden consists of boulders, bamboo groves and white pebbles representing islands, forest and sea. And dotting its bed of white pebbles and green moss are carefully selected stones that complete the mosaic of natural equanimity, inspiring rest and meditation.

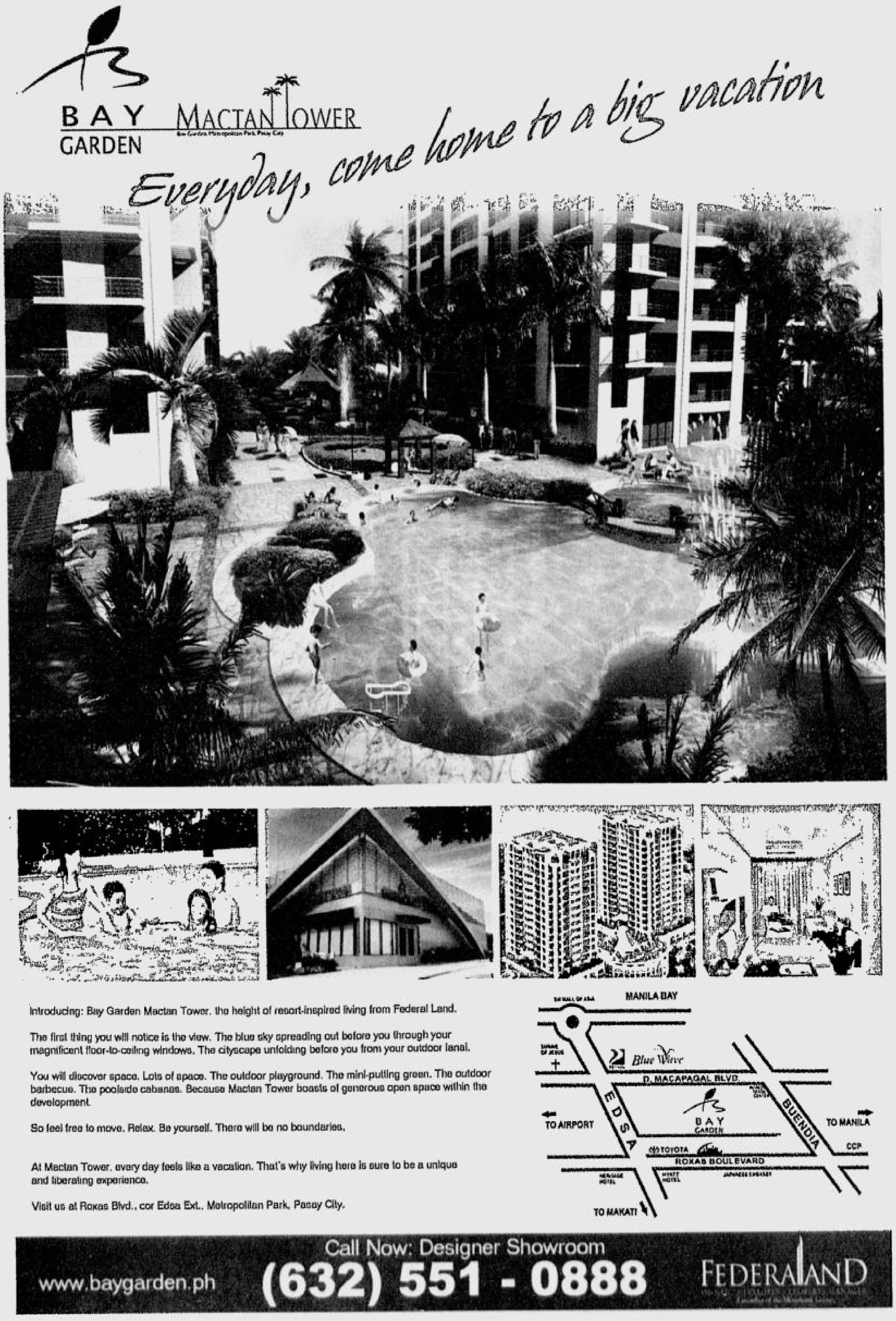
The clubhouse of Mayfield Park Residences (Tel. No. 888-3333) and its model unit are open for viewing.

Clubhouse attraction

While fully equipped with modern equipment and facilities, including an audio-video room, the clubhouse remains to be a lot of things to the residents who are drawn to it for various reasons.

At one time, the clubhouse served as a meditation center for the guests of a resident couple—the wife an artist and the husband a tai chi master.

Nonetheless, there are those who come to play billiards with neighbors, swim in the pool, or meditate at the koi pond, while others seem just content being there, relishing the blessings of nature and how it has come to give a new definition to life in the city.



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Promo focuses on Filipino dream to own one's home

THIS house and lot from LPHI's Sta. Catalina Village is the top prize in the "Home Sarap Home" promo.

LIKE MOST OTHER FILIPINOS, OFWs and professionals who go abroad are motivated by one dream: to buy and own a home when they return.

The observation ties in with a recent study of Asians in developing countries. Fifty-nine percent identified owning a home as the second most cherished desire, second only to good health. The study noted that having a place to call one's own eclipsed financial security, a happy marriage and even a college education. Surprisingly, the latter landed only in the 14th slot.

"To many Filipinos, a home represents security and is usually their single biggest investment," notes Dinna Bayangos, president of Laguna Properties Holdings, a subsidiary of Ayala Land.

LPHI has become a preferred developer of OFWs and professionals and entrepreneurs. It offers an affordable way to own a comfortable home and has projects in various locations—from in-city condominium units in central neighborhoods to two-story residences and townhouses in the suburbs.

Co-branding tie-up

Beginning this month, LPHI, Kraft Food Philippines and the Electrolux Group jointly focus on the Filipino dream of owning a home through a co-branding tie-up. Over a six week period, the three companies will be offering two houses and lots in LPHI's Sta. Catalina Village as well as over a hundred Electrolux kitchen appliances.

Sta. Catalina Village in Southern Metro Manila is one of LPHI's fastest-selling housing projects owing to the fact that it is within easy commuting distance to the Alabang Town Center, Makati and other business districts. It is only 15 minutes from the Ayala-developed community in Muntinlupa.

The two Sta. Catalina Village houses and lots have a combined value of P4.3 million. The homes will be given away inclusive of taxes, fees and legal documentation.

Double bonus

"The winners of these LPHI homes will enjoy a double bonus. They'll get a free house and lot. Moreover, the homes are in LPHI communities where they can be sure their investment will be secure," Raquel S. Cruz, project manager points out. LPHI homes make use of European building systems that ensure consistent quality.

LPHI communities are appreciated by homeowners because security is round the clock and facilities such as water and drainage systems, cable, power and telephone lines, and perimeter fences are complete and delivered on time. Because they are located in peaceful communities, LPHI homes have generally retained their value over the long term.

To qualify for the promo, consumers must write their complete name, address, contact numbers and signature on a piece of paper and enclose the packaging or lug caps of at least two different brands of Kraft Foods Philippines. Entries may be dropped in participating groceries and supermarkets nationwide.

Packaging or lug caps of Kraft Food products that may be used to join the "Home Sarap Home" promo include Miracle Whip, Chunky Chunks, Oreos cookies, Tang juices and iced tea, Cheez Whiz, Kool Aid juices, Maxwell House and Kraft Cheddar Cheese.

There will be six weekly and two monthly draws in the Greater Manila Area, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Other prizes include P1.1-million worth of home appliances and equipment for kitchen, cleaning and outdoor use from the Electrolux Group.

The first LPHI house-and-lot unit in Santa Catalina Village will be drawn on Nov. 26. The second LPHI residence, which comes with a kitchen showcase, will be drawn on Dec. 4, 2005.

For more information on how to own an LPHI house, visit its website at www.lphi.com.ph or call 864-5744 for more details.

PROPERTY

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Avoiding the pitfalls of house buying

By Tessa R. Salazar

OWNING A HOUSE could be the ultimate reward, but hunting for one could be downright daunting. You could buy a house and learn later that the foundation beneath is weak, or that you wake up one rainy day to find your house in the middle of a "lash lake."

Three real property professionals share valuable tips to make that dream house come true, or close to the ideal as possible.

"In order to avoid weak ground such as the Cherry Hill project (in Antipolo), there is no substitute for thorough inspection of the site or location, and if possible (do it) with an expert civil engineer," said real estate broker and engineer Enrico Cruz from Urban Institute of Real Estate and Construction.

As for floods, Cruz said that buyers could ask nearby residents or observe the existing houses and their surroundings.

"For example, if garbage seems to ramp up, that could be attributed to flooding. If you can, visit the prospective house or project during a heavy downpour for a first-hand experience," said Cruz.

For Demetrio L. Posadas, immediate past president of the Creba Social Housing Foundation, a digital plotting technology is now available to provide basic information such as the zoning and immediate vicinity of the prospective property. Still, he stressed, there is no substitute for actual ocular inspection and investigation of the site.

Posadas also chairs Fortune Star Construction and Development Corp. and heads Steel Building Technology Systems Inc.

Cruz urges buyers to return to the site after the first "tripping" with the seller or broker. He advised that buyers visit the site again without the broker or seller, so that they can interview residents and make a more thorough investigation.

"We have the story of the home buyer who bought the house because of the nice environment, clean and fresh air of the site which was near the mountain. Unfortunately, it was too late when he discovered that in the afternoons the direction of the wind changed, and the offensive smell of a piggery in the other direction wafted their way. The buyer then recalled why the seller was very insistent that the tripping happened only in the morning," Cruz said.

Common mistakes

Cruz identified the following as the common mistakes first-time home buyers commit:

- **Insisting on trying to buy a home that is way above than what they can really afford.** This result to delay in the purchase and failure to acquire a modest home that could have saved the money spent for rentals and start them to the equity buildup stage.
- **Being too unrealistic about current home prices, thus postponing the purchase until prices go up.**
- **Being too hurried to buy thus paying more than real market value.**
- **Not having someone who is knowledgeable and willing to help.** Or relying too much on the advice of friends and relatives rather than professionals.
- **Spending so much time looking for a home before establishing how much they can afford.**
- **Not knowing that they have to set aside some amount of money for closing costs.**
- **Unaware of the different types of government subsidized housing loans and mortgages available to a first-time buyer.**
- **Failure to conduct a thorough inspection of the house with an engineer or professional before closing purchase.**
- **Failure to check the contract of sale thoroughly for unfavorable clauses.**
- **When buying from build and sell developers, failure to check out the reputation of the builder by interviewing people who are living in houses that the builder has built.**

Budget

Posadas said that another prime consideration would have to be the monthly amortizations the prospective house hunter would have to shoulder, especially so if the buyer needs long-term mortgage financing.

"One should double check their budgets for the house, then check the home financing (packages) available."

Posadas said that based on the budget, one should look for a house location near the place of work, worship, commercial area, water and electrical facilities, hospitals, schools and other necessary infrastructure.

These considerations, for ERA Philippines country president and CEO Eric Soriano, should be contemplated. ERA Philippines is a real estate consulting firm whose parent company is based in Singapore.

Other considerations Soriano encouraged house-hunters to answer include, "What kind of house do I want? Do I want a bungalow, two-story house, a condominium? What size of space do I need? How many bedrooms do I need? How many people will be living here? Will I be entertaining at home? Do I expect a lot of guests? Do I need a garage? Do I need to reserve space for my future children?"

Buying or renting?

"If one is looking for a maintenance-free lifestyle, renting could be the way to go. This is especially true if you do not plan to spend a long time in that place. When you rent, you have the option to personalize your space by choosing a bare unit or you can go the hassle-free way and just rent a fully furnished home," added Soriano.

Soriano said that if a buyer is looking for a more permanent home, one where he or she sees himself or herself living in for the next five to 10 years, then purchasing a home may be the best bet.

"When renting at an average of P20,000 a month, you will have spent P2.4 million in 10 years (without considering rent hikes) and have nothing to show for it."

Soriano added that with the highly competitive real estate market in the country today, home buyers are presented with a whole menu of payment options designed for their different needs.

MAIA Alta

Crown Asia's American, Italian-inspired enclaves

TODAY'S TRYING TIMES PRESENT a reality which calls for both parents to tediously labor for a secure future for their children, with their conservative budgets not allowing the leisure of traveling outside the country. Faced with this situation, the career-driven individual's and couples' desire to discover beautiful places around the world becomes an illusive reward for their heavy work.

With the aspirations of thousands of Filipino families in mind, Crown Asia, the country's premiere real estate developer makes these dreams a reality by gathering the globe's best architectural and cultural treasures to create unique milieus in the country. A leader in the real estate industry for a decade, Crown Asia brings home the world's finest with its roster of master-planned residential communities in the north of Metro Manila.

US country-style homes

- **Cottonwoods.** Located in Antipolo, Rizal, the residents of Cottonwoods are artists and families desiring of a home with serene surroundings interspersed with nature. Residents enjoy the cool temperature of Antipolo's elevated terrains. The community is over 40 hectares of unspoiled nature and lush landscaping, offering a wide range of cozy single-detached American country-style model homes to choose from.
- **Woodberry.** The peak of Antipolo, Rizal nestles Woodberry, a picturesque hilltop neighborhood surrounded by mango orchards. Cool air constantly breeze through the surroundings while a sweeping view of greens can be enjoyed by every resident. The American ranch-style homes at Woodberry feature picket fences, lush landscaping, and wide roads create a picture-perfect community.

Taste of Mediterranean life

- **Maia Alta.** Surrounded by a spectacular view and rolling terrain agreeing with Antipolo's tranquil ambiance, Maia Alta offers the ideal environment in which to raise families. The community's wide open spaces allow children to frolic, treasuring moments of carefree fun and laughter. Inspired by the success of Maia Alta's first phase, immediate development of the Hills, Gardens, Orchard, Groves, Trails, and Court-

CROWN/ B3-2

COTTONWOODS

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Amici

Within the radius of Daang Hari Road, Alabang will spring a community called Amici, the Italian word for "friend". Because like a true friend, Amici will give you and your family a complete sense of security and belongingness. Two guarded entry gates, high property fences, well-lit roads and a linear road will be put up to grace the community's interior. What's more, all homes along Amici's property line will be facing inwardly for better security and interaction among neighbors. This amicable atmosphere extends to its four model homes which will feature family-centered rooms and well accessorized kitchens and bathrooms.

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How to get there: From Alabang Town Center, take Daang Hari Road, enter through Southvale or through Springville Meadows near Molino Road.

Know more about Amici! Because like a good friend, what it reveals will draw you closer to it.

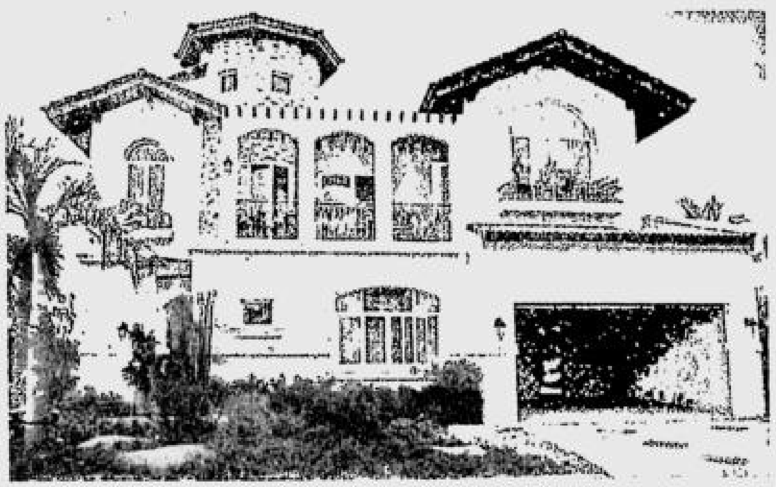
Call 873-1614 / 871-3882 / 873-8412

Living the luxury of space at Portofino

THE MEDITERRANEAN-INSPIRED Raphael makes room for a magnificent landscape of towering rocks, placid water and lush green before its impressive façade.

THE SUN-DRENCHED Raphael's massive windows bring the expansive outdoor garden into the spacious living room.

GENEROUS streams of light from wide windows transform this cozy living room into fresh, lofty area for entertaining.



THE GRANDEUR of Rembrandt allows one to indulge in the luxury of space.

MAVERICK PROPERTY DEVELOPER Brittany Corp. is pulling all the stops in bringing the sweet life to Alabang's plush suburb. Its grand vision, a resplendent interpretation of fine Italian living called Portofino, translates to a 200-hectare horizontal stretch.

For Brittany, an extensive width-wise development lends a certain stability, grandness and earthy charm that is lacking in steel and concrete skyscrapers.

"While we admire the effort it takes to create tall buildings that practically defy gravity, there is a sense of serenity in the kind of grandness that horizontal expansion can evoke which vertical structures can never capture," said Jing Serrano, president of Brittany.

"Horizontal expansion means you have larger grounds to move around in. It allows for better circulation of air and more sunlight to naturally illuminate the area. And it would also provide more area for open spaces. And the Portofino development, I am proud to say, is a perfect example of such," Serrano continued.

Italian-inspired

Portofino is an Italian-inspired development taking its cues from the European nation's paved cobblestones, sun-drenched colors and magnificent architecture. But more than the design details, it is the Italians' passion for life that strikes a chord in the hearts of Filipinos.

This unabashed appreciation for the moment and everything it offers is the true spirit behind development. With this in mind, Brittany's Portofino literally brings a piece of Italy to the Philippines along with all the modern conveniences that living the good life requires.

At 200 hectares, Portofino is among the largest master-planned properties in the country. Located along the stretch of the Las Piñas-Cavite-Laguna-Muntinlupa Link Road, it is merely five minutes away from Alabang's business district.

5 distinct enclaves

Divided into five distinct enclaves—Portofino Heights, Portofino South, Courtyards of Portofino 1, Courtyards 2, and The WideLot Series—plus a 15-hectare commercial district, the entire property is truly a world all its own.

Even when taken individually, the grandeur of Portofino's enclaves is impossible to miss. Rather than appearing diminished, its magnitude becomes better appreciated.

Portofino Heights (phases 1-4), to begin with, covers 27 hectares with lot cuts ranging from 300 to 700 square meters. Portofino South (phases 1-8) occupies 69 hectares and offers lot cuts ranging from 307 to 1,102 sq m. Courtyards of Portofino 1 occupies six-hectare homes with lot cuts ranging from 224 to 504 sq m.

Courtyards 2 and The WideLot Series, the latest in the Portofino development, occupy all of 18 hectares. Courtyards 2 offers lot cuts ranging from 289 to 393 sq m. The WideLot Series, on the other hand, has lot cuts ranging from 272 to 594 sq m.

But there is more to Brittany's horizontal expansion than merely large areas with large lot cuts.

Very limited number of lots

In certain properties, Portofino offers a very limited number of lots as home sites. Courtyards of Portofino 1, for instance, offers only 98 lots. Courtyards 2, on the other hand, will accommodate only 77 homes. More than exclusivity, this arrangement provides more open spaces for shared gardens and walkways and encourages outdoor activities.

The WideLot Series, on the other hand, focuses on wider frontage for a true appreciation of the luxury of space. It offers a frontage ranging from 17 to 22 m with width depth ranging from 16 to 18 m.

"With The WideLot Series, there is an improved streetscape and architecture since the frontage is wider. The air circulation is improved because the design can accommodate more windows. And the backyard is larger so both adults and children can enjoy the open air without encroaching on each other's activities," Serrano explained.

At Portofino, the grandeur of Italian homes goes beyond arches, balconies and towers. To indulge in the luxury of space is a guilty pleasure only Brittany dares to offer.

For inquiries and property previews, please call 850-2868 or 850-3084.

'Structure as design' concept for A. Venue Residences

TODAY'S HOMEOWNERS ARE BEING lured by the prestige offered by condo living, which affords them other add-on values such as proximity to a business district and commercial areas. Most of them are also becoming more practical in terms of value-for-money features when searching for property.

Space and volume of a unit emerge as major considerations when checking out different high-rise residences, giving home buyers more freedom to jazz up interiors and utilize function areas for their home.

Edward C. Tan, principal architect of. Edward Co Tan + Architects, had this in mind when his firm was conceptualizing the design for The A. Venue Residences, a new premier high-rise tower conveniently located in the heart of Makati, specifically along Makati Avenue.

The A. Venue Residences is a theme and lifestyle community that provides all the comforts and luxuries of home combined with the amenities of a 5-star hotel and world-class resort.

Tan was hired by property owner Antel Land Holdings Inc., one of the country's fast-rising firms, backed by an 18-year experience in real estate and high-rise developments.

New concept

For The A. Venue Residences, Tan's company implemented a relatively new concept in architecture, oriented more toward new age design emphasizing function but not sacrificing style called "structure as design."

Structure as design is a state-of-the-art construction technique that allows for "beamless and column-free" designs, resulting in residential suites that have more useable space and volume (height). This design then allows more freedom in interior design, since no unsightly columns and beams will limit the creative possibilities for décor.

The increased space is an added bonus, since residents have more leeway in choosing furniture that will fit their lifestyle, without worrying too much about how it can fit in the condo space.

"Structure as design is all about including the structure and electromechanical members as part of the design, to be able to achieve better usable volume," Tan explained.

No protruding structures

Said Tan: "A column or post will traditionally protrude through the wall, but if we are able to have it flattened as to which it will be inside the thickness of the wall, we will be able to lessen the wall's cross-sectional area or wall surface. It's like hitting two birds with one stone. There will be no protrusions, and the partition will become part of the structure itself."

Structure as design is implemented during the phase of schematic planning or starting of development of the concept. "The architect should be able to forecast how the structure is going to stand and where the passages of the electromechanical members or the plumbing will be located, so there won't be any surprises, such as crossing over of the beam along the center of the room or protrusion of a fuse column at the corner. It's very unsightly. Traditionally, it's not part of the planning. With structure as design, the architect should be more than an architect. He should be able to consider all the engineering works also," Tan said.

Projects influenced

He added that there are many prominent projects around the world being influenced by structure as design, such as the Hong Kong Bank of China, which was constructed way back in the mid '80s.

For The A. Venue project, Tan's firm used walls as columns and beams, so there are no protruding structures.

Modern residential tower

Sitting on a 1.7-hectare prime property in Makati Avenue, The A. Venue Residences features a modern residential tower surrounded by five-star hotel amenities and facilities, such as a grand ballroom, three interconnected 220-sq-m swimming pools and a coffee shop.

Also included are indoor game rooms, home theater lounge, a fitness center, a day care center, a library and business center, a children's playground and a sauna for men and women.

The A. Venue Residences offers one-, two- and three-bedroom units.

For inquiries, call 7572615-16 or visit www.antel.com.ph.

COLUMN-FREE rooms allow for more usable space, especially in the corners, which can be used for creative interior designs.

How to achieve maximum lighting at less cost

DURING THESE TIMES OF SEVERE ECOnomic difficulties brought about by soaring fuel costs, the first thing to be directly affected by any energy conservation measure is our consumption of electricity.

An important area where one can achieve big savings in electricity cost in lighting usage—whether in homes, business offices or commercial and industrial establishments.

Maxilum Inc., a pioneering 25-year-old Filipino company that produces and supplies vacuum metalized lighting fixtures, has achieved a major breakthrough in energy conservation through significant wattage reduction in the already energy-efficient fluorescent lamp with its patented aluminum reflectorized lighting fixtures.

Maxilum formula

"The Maxilum formula in energy savings is very simple," said Luisito A. Figueroa, founder and president of Maxilum. "All it would take is to reduce the number of operating fluorescent lamps in a lighting fixture without necessarily lessening their illuminating capacity through the use of customized lighting reflectors."

Figueroa pointed out that by utilizing two fluorescent lamps instead of four or three, one instead of two in a lighting fixture, a dramatic savings of 50 percent in electricity cost can be realized without any sacrifice in illumination level.

Lessened fluorescent light usage will not necessarily result in lower percentage of illumination, though, but, on the contrary, even increase illumination level and bring out the true, authentic colors of the objects being lit because of the low iridescence emitted by the patented Maxilum process in the reflectors.

Maximizing reflective quality

He explained that the reduction in fluorescent lamp operation is more than compensated for by the use of pure aluminum on the surface of Maxilum reflectors that exhibit 95 percent reflective properties. Its patented Reflectodynamic design make Maxilum reflectors superior to infringing mirrorized reflectors, which have only 80 percent reflective properties.

By maximizing the reflective quality of the reflectors, the efficiency and productivity of workers in an office or factory are not compromised but are even enhanced since the atmosphere of comfort and ease in the work place is maintained

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Crown Asia's American. . .

From page B3-1

yard followed. As the newest phase located along the highest point of Antipolo, the Terraces offers an unobstructed view of Binangonan and Laguna de Bay. Maia Alta is a mere 30-minute drive from Ortigas, prime schools and commercial centers, yet retains the sense of privacy and exclusivity for its residents.

- **Mille Luce.** The hills of Antipolo becomes home to Crown Asia's latest Italian city of affordable luxury, Mille Luce. True to its Italian name which means "a thousand lights," Mille Luce's prime location in the highest peak of the metro makes it an enclave between the stars and city lights while providing a 360° view of Metro Manila's skyline and a breathtaking glimpse of Laguna de Bay. It features two areas with a wide selection of homes available to suit varying needs and tastes:
- L'Altra, with a collection of terraced single-detached abodes with an inner courtyard;
- La Scala, an ingenious cluster of multiple family dwellings while maintaining a sense of privacy. Phases of Mille Luce include the Pastorale, surrounded by dense groups of mango trees, it is the perfect site for single-detached homes; and Porte Porteze, the commercial area named after a famous flea market in Rome.

Distinguishing characteristics

- **Suiting the progressing lifestyle.** Crown Asia continues to evolve with the progressing lifestyles and unique need of its present and future homeowners. While other real estate developers have stayed within the confines of the metropolis, Crown Asia scoured the country from North to South to find untapped locations and turned them into prime residential communities.
- **Designs of enduring excellence and recognized value.** Quality homes that incorporate nature and evoke distinct design influences are inspired by architectural themes from all over the world. Crown Asia proves its title as "Your Home of Choice" with world-class communities to complement every lifestyle, need and taste.
- **Allowing a well-rounded community life.** With a keen understanding of individuals who've painstakingly labored for years to ensure their family's future, Crown Asia allows them to experience life's affordable luxuries like exclusive amenities and conveniences which can be enjoyed without having to leave the community.
- **"Building greater values into your new homes."** Renowned companies and individuals in their respective industries join Crown Asia in "building greater values into your new homes"—the ingenious architectural design of Recio+Casas and SCA; the unique interiors of top designers Pinky Cruz, Wilmer Lopez and Trina Adapon-Jacinto; and the collaboration of noted landscape artists Robert Gopiao, Benny Velasco and Jojo Lazaro.

Property previews may be arranged by calling Crown North at 634-9001 and 634-9002.

An accessible yet secure city home at Bonifacio Ridge

SINGLE PARENT MADONNA TARRAYO heads the client services division of a popular production house. She understands the merits of hard work, as well as the importance of spending quality time with her teen daughter Ara. They moved into their Bonifacio Ridge condo unit only last January and found the place easy to acclimate to.

According to her, they used to live with her parents in Fort Bonifacio. Says Madonna: "It's a single-detached house in the camp. This is the first time we actually are living on our own. This is really a time for me and my daughter to bond. It gives us a chance to be closer. My parents still visit us, as they're only a few minutes away."

Searching

Madonna searched for her ideal home for about a year. She initially didn't want to live in a condo, as she and her daughter had gotten used to living in a house. But a cousin recommended several condos anyway, including Bonifacio Ridge.

"I decided to come here and inspect the place. I saw that the space is big and it's used well. It's also in the Fort, a very good location. The accessibility is really good, and the proximity to my daughter's school and my office is just a short drive," she says.

Conveniences

They discovered a number of other conveniences long before transferring to their new home. Says Madonna: "We can shop at the nearby mall. There's a church close by. It's also not as busy as Makati. It's developing so there are a lot of greens. There are parks you can go to. The Fort Strip and a gym are just there, so you don't really need to get out of the area if it's not necessary."

Ara agrees that the location of their Bonifacio Ridge home has attracted her school friends, too. "They come over all the time. Their favorite place is the pool downstairs, so instead of going elsewhere, we just hang out there. They want to live here, too. When we go out, it's usually to eat in the restaurants at the Fort Strip," she says.

Her mom, however, fancies another unique spot. "Sometimes I read a book at the sandbox, even if it's made for kids, for quiet time. I see the sky and the greens there, so I really enjoy that," says Madonna.

The Tarrayos also appreciate the condominium's well-trained staff. "The security and admin people here are very helpful and friendly. The service is personalized. They're so accessible; any time you need something, you just go to them and they act immediately on your requests," they say.

Decor

Decorating the spacious unit is easy, according to Madonna. She went for a modern Asian theme, using different furniture pieces and appliances from across the region.

Says Madonna: "This chandelier is from Vietnam, while that antique electric fan is from Bangkok. I wanted to mix the old and new items. It's easy to customize. When you buy a unit here, it's very livable; you don't really have to do anything to it. It's value for money. With 113 square meters of good space, it's worth it. I chose it over living in a really busy environment."

Like being in a house

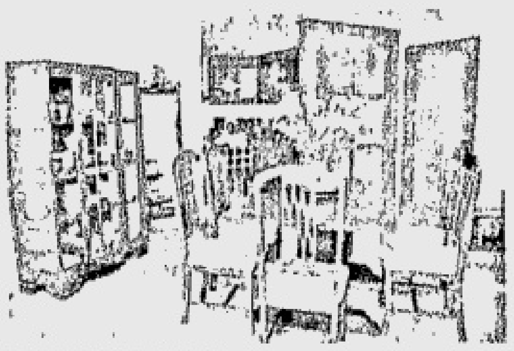
She adds that she and Ara are looking forward to more comfortable years of bonding at their new home. "For somebody like me who never really imagined living in a building, I'd recommend Bonifacio Ridge. I still feel a semblance of being in a house. It's very homey, very safe, and very convenient. The Fort is a developing community, and I'm sure later on, there'll be more conveniences that we can enjoy around us," Madonna says.

Bonifacio Ridge is a development by Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., managed and marketed by Ayala Land. It is a prime residential condominium within the city that offers first-rate amenities and recreational facilities that meet the diverse lifestyles of its tenants.

Ayala Land is the country's largest and most experienced full-line real estate developer. Its properties are designed with an unwavering commitment to quality and service, which continues to surpass the expectations of the company's diverse market.

To know more about Bonifacio Ridge, call 728-7000, e-mail ayalasales@ayalaland.com.ph or visit www.ayalaland.com.ph.

THE LIVING room is characterized by a combination of colorful and earth-toned items from across Asia.



THE TARRAYOS' dining area provides them with a spacious venue for themselves and their guests.

MADONNA and Ara Tarrayo enjoy independence at their new Bonifacio Ridge home.

GRAND LAUNCH "CELEBRITY BADMINTON TOURNAMENT" SEPTEMBER 24, 2005

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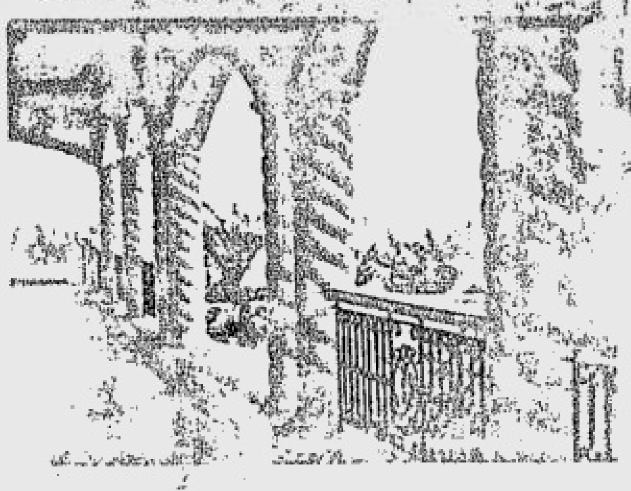

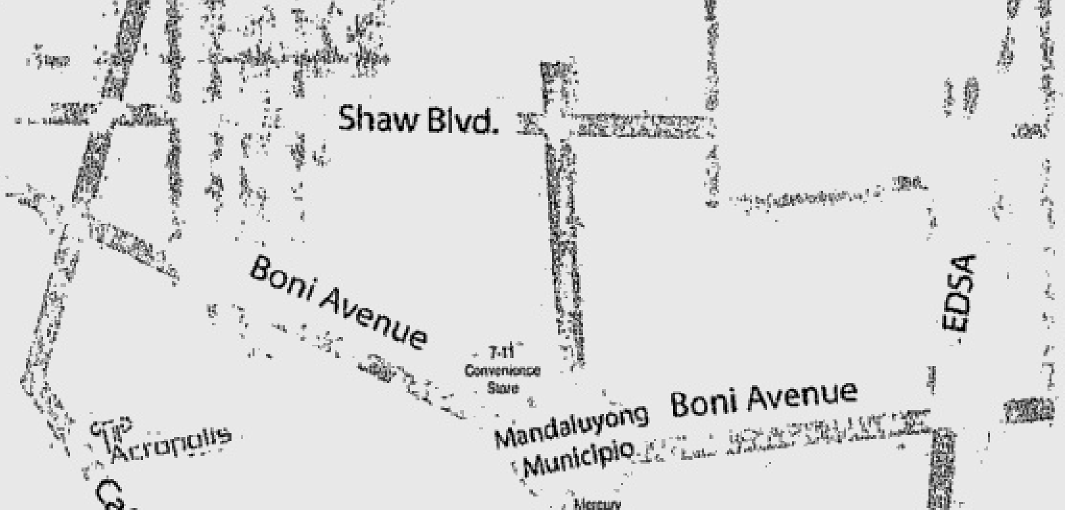

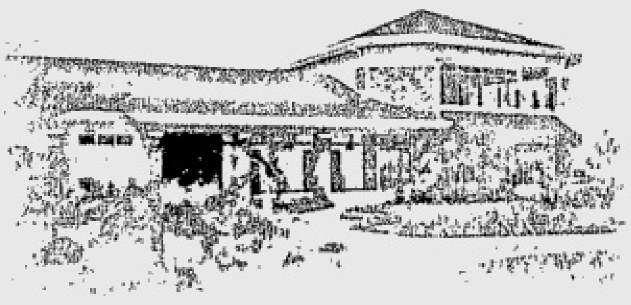

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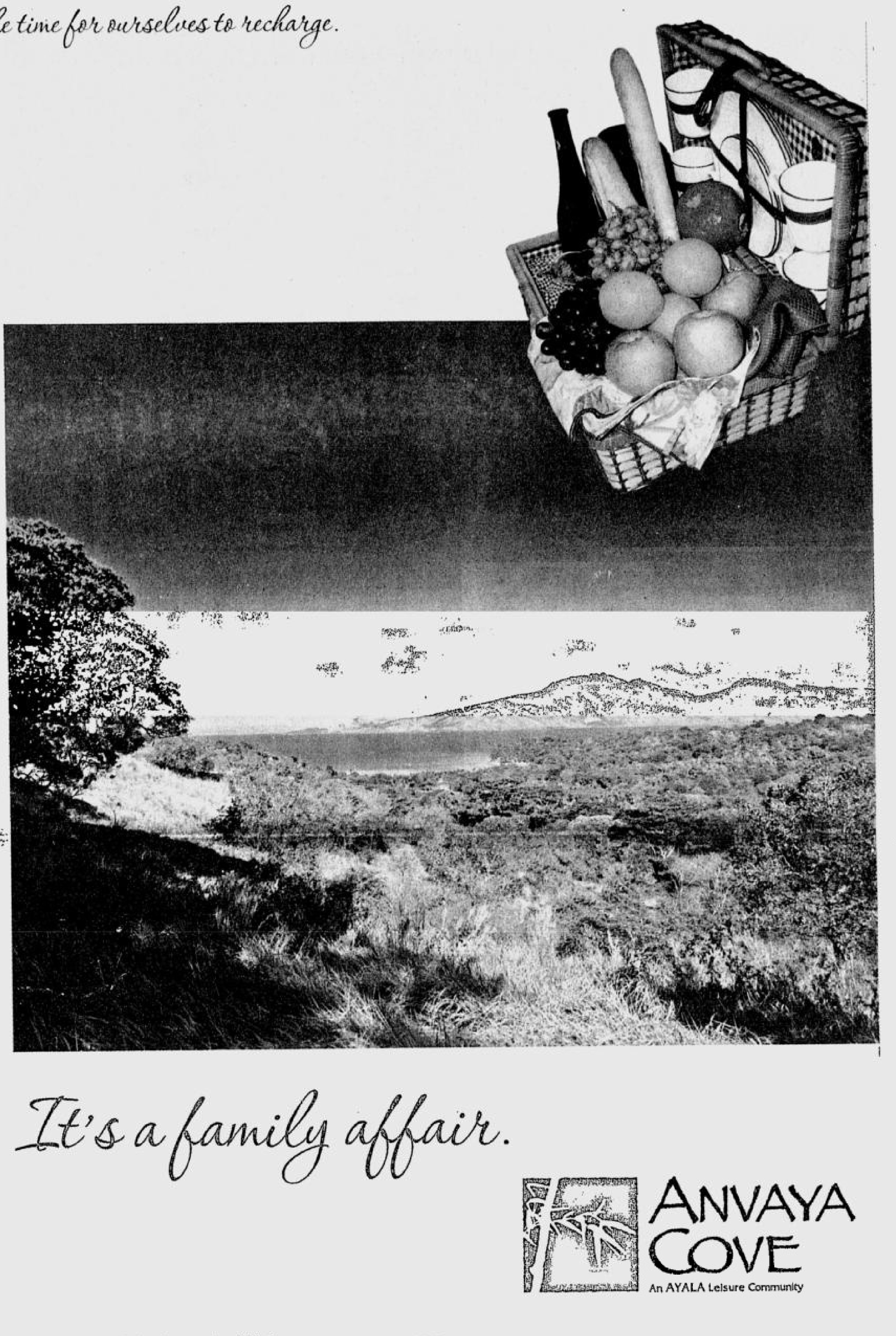
Never a dull moment! We get to do things together and also the things we enjoy on our own. So my kids take to the outdoors.... as for hubby and I? We take the time for ourselves to recharge.



Anvaya Cove combines modern conveniences with outdoor pleasures. In the heart of this enviable, exclusive leisure community is the Beach and Nature Club — a gathering place amidst spectacular lagoon landscaping — for wining, dining and unwinding. With an excellent service staff and specially trained rangers to attend to all your needs.

Varied recreational amenities provide opportunities for bonding and unique experiences that all members can share. Beachside barbecues at the Pawikan Bar & Grille and buffet lunches at the Bamboo Café make great excuses for fun family reunions all year round. Take time out to rejuvenate with a special massage at the Veda Spa under tropical foliage. Cool down with your favorite summer shakes at the Tower Bar. Get the clan together for a game of frisbee at the Great Lawn.

Own a slice of paradise and dare to live the life you've always wanted. Your exclusive membership in the Beach and Nature Club offers you options to extend this experience. Select a residential lot where you can build your dream vacation home. Or own one of a number of luxurious seaside villas located a short walk away from the main beach.

In your search for the ideal second home, there is absolutely no leisure community in the country that is as warm and inviting for your family as Anvaya Cove.

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An AYALA Leisure Community

A joint development project of

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Anvaya Cove: Where mountains meet the sea

The Philippines' abundance in natural resources make it an internationally renowned tourist and vacation destination: from the scenic mountains of cool climate, healthy gastronomic feasts, and more relaxed, laidback family adventures, to the sunny wide beaches, the closest respites from the Metro Manila scene especially during summer.

There is a place north of Manila where activities of both locales are possible... where leisure seekers can enjoy staying in such breathtaking community that offers the best of both worlds - having mountain and sea adventures.

Anvaya Cove, Ayala Land Premiere's first leisure community development is one such offering. It is located in Morong, Bataan, a convenient 20-minute drive from the Subic Bay Freeport, also noted to be a favorite vacation hotspot in the country. It is known that Subic Bay's well-preserved environment resulted from the careful masterplanning of the local government unit guided by decades of American presence, allowing this rich in nature sanctuary to preserve its rustic allure. Ayala Land is just as fortunate to have found a piece of this leisure paradise to treasure and share with Filipino families.

Anvaya Cove's 320-hectare property boasts of rolling hills of forests and hills, and at the same time, a 1.2km wide beachfront and three (3) coves - a truly unique feature of the leisure development. Anvaya Cove is a community thoughtfully conceived and planned with families in mind. Its spectacular setting is conducive to bring endless bonding occasions, to share unforgettable experiences and forge lifelong memories.

Anvaya Cove Beach & Nature Club

In the heart of the Anvaya Cove community is the sprawling Beach & Nature Club, a members-only gathering place amidst magnificent lagoon landscaping - for wining, dining and unwinding. Anvaya Cove's Beach and Nature Club offers varied recreation amenities that provide fun opportunities to engage all members of the family. Resort quality service will be offered to to complete the Anvaya experience.

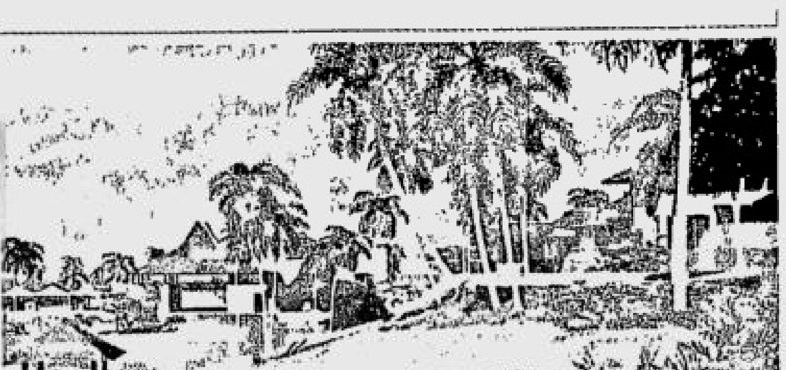
Eco-adventures on Land

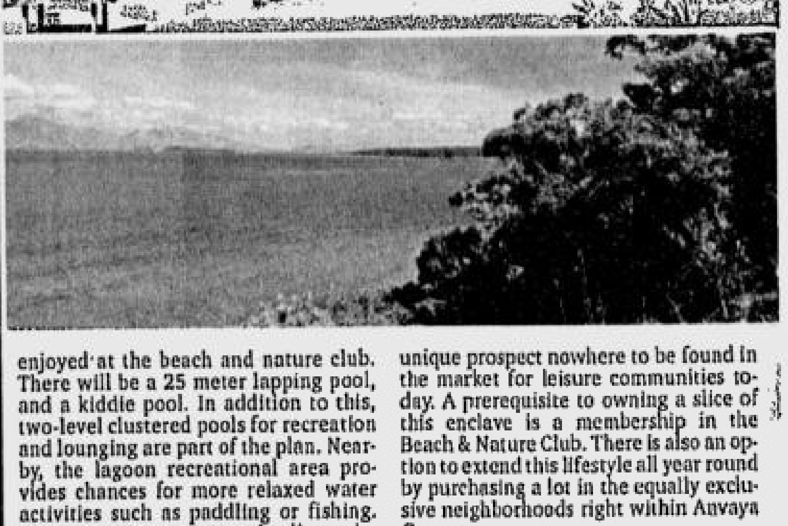
For nature adventurers, Anvaya has exciting eco-trails winding around its lush, verdant forests abounding in the premises. This provides for hours of discovery especially suitable for young children as specially trained forest rangers to lead their explorations. The Nature Camp houses the more dynamic activities such as zipping through trees on a living fox or building team spirit on rope courses. At the Beach & Nature Club's Great Lawn, families can enjoy picnics on the comfortable grass, even rounds of frisbee throwing or kite flying with friends and family.

Eco-adventures in the Water

For those who take pleasure in the beach, the wide stretch of the warm sand is a venue for popular beach activites like building sand castles with the kids or even playing tug-of-war with the entire clan. Again, for the curious children, exploration of shallow marine ecosystems will give them new insights and educational experiences even during vacation time. This is possible with Anvaya's trained marine rangers on hand to lead the pack. Water sports facilities can be rented, and beachside barbecues can be made complete with food and entertainment at the Pawikan Beach Bar and Grille, which will have a large open deck for teens and young adults to hang out under the sun and stars.

What could be considered the highlight of the Anvaya sea experience are its three natural coves. The biggest one is the main attraction of the Beach & Nature Club. With its wide, open beachfront, expect that majority of the beach socialization will transpire here. On the left of this beachfront is a secluded cove that serves as visual spectacle of those that will be residing at Hillside at Anvaya, the first neighborhood in the development. The cove to the right of the main beachfront shall be left untouched for environmental exploration and adventure for the kids.





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Owning a piece of Anvaya Cove

Truly, Ayala Land Premier is offering a unique prospect nowhere to be found in the market for leisure communities today. A prerequisite to owning a slice of this enclave is a membership in the Beach & Nature Club. There is also an option to extend this lifestyle all year round by purchasing a lot in the equally exclusive neighborhoods right within Anvaya Cove.

To know about Anvaya Cove, visit the Greenbelt showroomat Greenbelt 2 Garden showroom near Italianni's and Segafredo or call 728-7000 or 892-3333, e-mail anvayacove@ayalaland.com.ph or visit www.anvayacove.com.

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Never a dull moment! We get to do things together and also the things we enjoy on our own. So my kids take to the outdoors... as for hubby and I? We take the time for ourselves to recharge.

Anvaya Cove combines modern conveniences with outdoor pleasures. In the heart of this enviable, exclusive leisure community is the Beach and Nature Club — a gathering place amidst spectacular lagoon landscaping — for wining, dining and unwinding. With an excellent service staff and specially trained rangers to attend to all your needs.

Varied recreational amenities provide opportunities for bonding and unique experiences that all members can share. Beachside barbecues at the Pawikan Bar & Grille and buffet lunches at the Bamboo Café make great excuses for fun family reunions all year round. Take time out to rejuvenate with a special massage at the Veda Spa under tropical foliage. Cool down with your favorite summer shakes at the Tower Bar. Get the clan together for a game of frisbee at the Great Lawn.

Own a slice of paradise and dare to live the life you've always wanted. Your exclusive membership in the Beach and Nature Club offers you options to extend this experience. Select a residential lot where you can build your dream vacation home. Or own one of a number of luxurious seaside villas located a short walk away from the main beach.

In your search for the ideal second home, there is absolutely no leisure community in the country that is as warm and inviting for your family as Anvaya Cove.

By Ayala Land, naturally.

It's a family affair.

ANVAYA COVE
An AYALA Leisure Community

A joint development project of
AYALA LAND, INC
SUDECO

Call: (632) 728-7000 or (632) 892-3333 / E-mail: anvayacove@ayalaland.com.ph / Visit: www.anvayacove.com

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Anvaya Cove: Where mountains meet the sea

The Philippines' abundance in natural resources make it an internationally renowned tourist and vacation destination- from the scenic mountains of cool climate, healthy gastronomic feasts, and more relaxed, laidback family adventures, to the sunny wide beaches, the closest respites from the Metro Manila scene especially during summer.

There is a place north of Manila where activities of both locales are possible... where leisure seekers can enjoy staying in such a breathtaking community that offers the best of both worlds - having mountain and sea adventures.

Anvaya Cove, Ayala Land Premiere's first leisure community development is one such offering. It is located in Morong, Bataan, a convenient 20-minute drive from the Subic Bay Freeport, also noted to be a favorite vacation hotspot in the country. It is known that Subic Bay's well-preserved environment resulted from the careful masterplanning of the local government unit guided by decades of American presence, allowing this rich-in-nature sanctuary to preserve its rustic allure. Ayala Land is just as fortunate to have found a piece of this leisure paradise to treasure and share with Filipino families.

Anvaya Cove's 320-hectare property boasts of rolling hills of forests and hills, and at the same time, a 1.2km wide beachfront and three (3) coves - a truly unique feature of the leisure development. Anvaya Cove is a community thoughtfully conceived and planned with families in mind. Its spectacular setting is conducive to bring endless bonding occasions, to share unforgettable experiences and forge lifelong memories.

Anvaya Cove Beach & Nature Club

In the heart of the Anvaya Cove community is the sprawling Beach & Nature Club, a members-only gathering place amidst magnificent lagoon landscaping - for wining, dining and unwinding. Anvaya Cove's Beach and Nature Club offers varied recreation amenities that provide fun opportunities to engage all members of the family. Resort quality service will be offered to to complete the Anvaya experience.

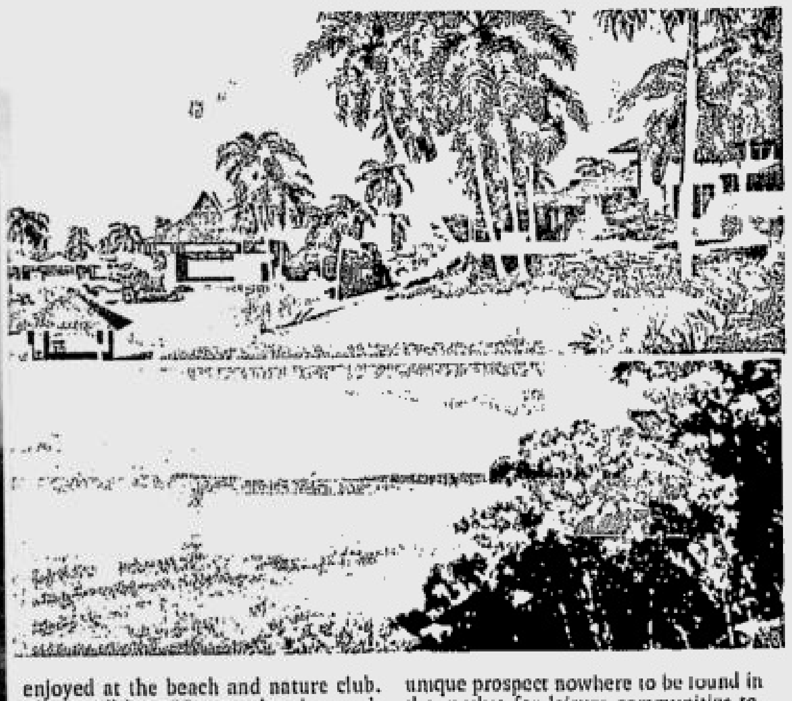
Eco-adventures on Land

For nature adventurers, Anvaya has exciting eco-trails winding around its lush verdant forests abounding in the premises. This provides for hours of discovery especially suitable for young children as specially-trained forest rangers to lead their explorations. The Nature Camp houses the more dynamic activities such as zipping through trees on a flying fox or building team spirit on rope courses. At the Beach & Nature Club's Great Lawn, families can enjoy picnics on the comfortable grass, even rounds of frisbee throwing or kite flying with friends and family.

Eco-adventures in the Water

For those who take pleasure in the beach, the wide stretch of the warm sand is a venue for popular beach activities like building sand castles with the kids or even playing tug-of-war with the entire clan. Apart for the curious children, exploration of shallow marine ecosystems will give them new insights and educational experiences even during vacation time. This is possible with Anvaya's trained marine rangers on hand to lead the pack. Water sports facilities can be rented, and beachside barbecues can be made complete with food and entertainment at the Pawikan Beach Bar and Grille, which will have a large open deck for teens and young adults to hang out under the sun and stars.

What could be considered the highlight of the Anvaya sea experience are its three natural coves. The biggest one is the main attraction of the Beach & Nature Club. With its wide open beachfront, expect that majority of the beach socialization will transpire here. On the left of this beachfront is a secluded cove that serves as visual [illegible] for those that will be residing at Cliffside at Anvaya, the first neighborhood in the development. The cove to the right of the main beachfront shall be left untouched for environmental exploration and adventure for the kids.



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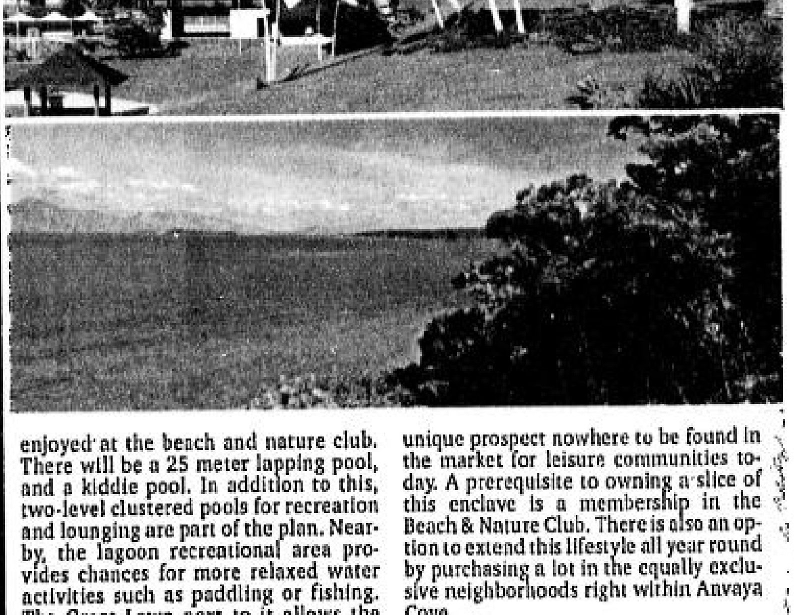

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2005

PHILIPPINE DA Y IN UIRE

Super 1

C1

E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: inquirer sup name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor **Pam Pastor**
Creative Director **Tim Yap**

Super!Countdown
37 days 'til Hallow's eve

style . urban living . pop culture . entertainment . recreation

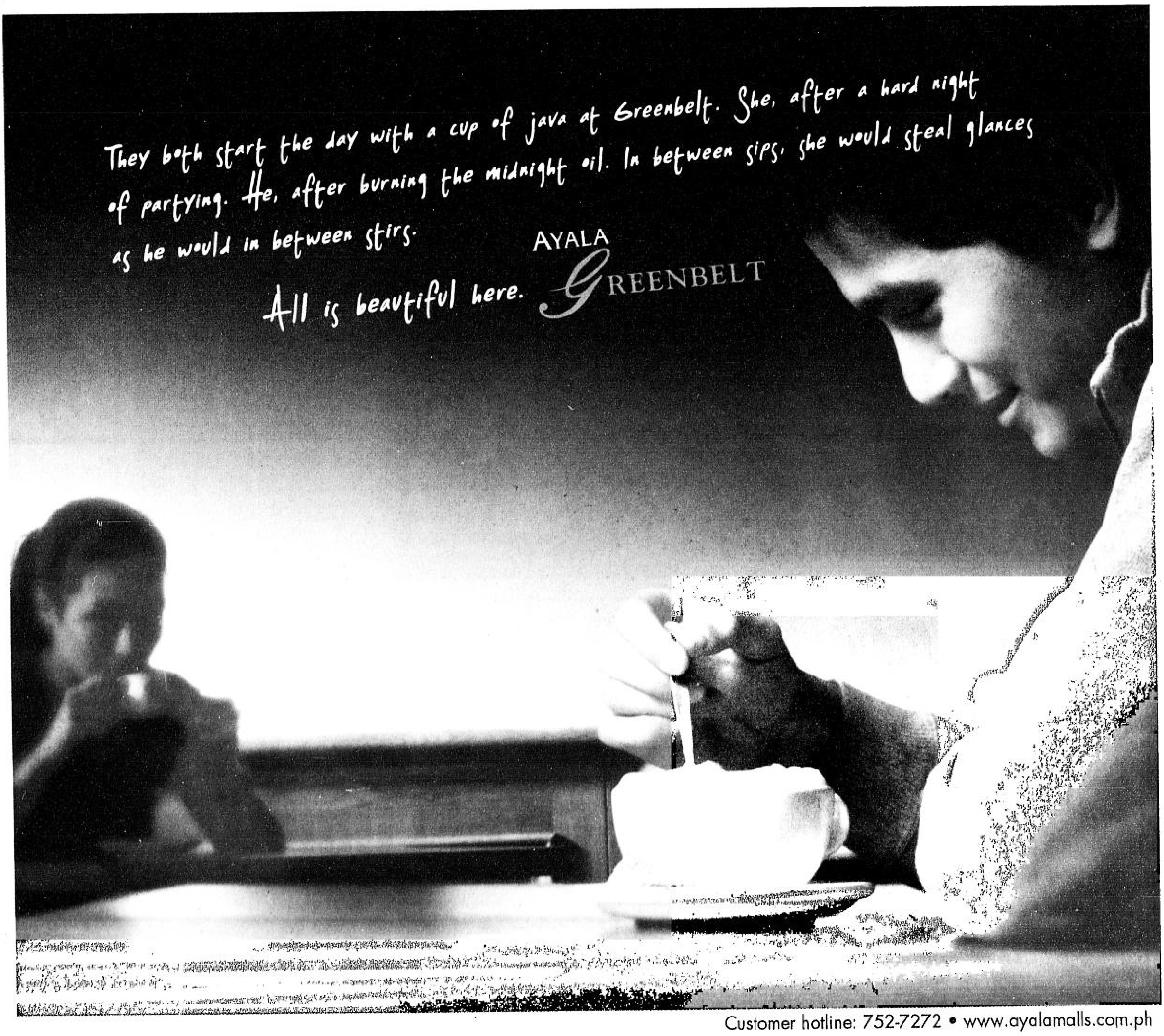
odds and ends

MTV VJ **Denise Keller's** fixation with the Philippines page C2

Tals Diaz is back from Brazil page D1

Canadian crooner **Michael Bublé** coming soon page C3

Produced by: TIM YAP
Photography: MARK NICDAO
Concept & Styling: MILLET ARZAGA
Makeup: XENG ZULUETA for Shu Uemura
Hair: JANET DE RAMA
Cover star: DENISE KELLER endorsing Plains n' Prints

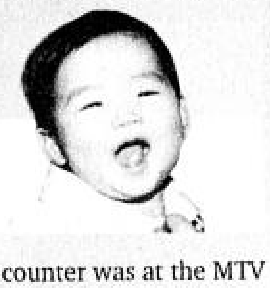


They both start the day with a cup of java at Greenbelt. She, after a hard night of partying. He, after burning the midnight oil. In between sips, she would steal glances as he would in between stirs.

All is beautiful here. AYALA GREENBELT

Customer hotline: 752-7272 • www.ayalamalls.com.ph

Portrait of Denise Keller



Tim Yap

AS THE MAIN FACE OF THIS GENERATION's favorite music channel, Denise Keller's life as the most in demand talking head on MTV today is as hectic as one would expect.

This German-Chinese video vixen started out as a model, dabbled in PR and now co-owns the new hot Singapore club Momo's (sounds like someone I know). I first saw her hosting Ricky Martin's concert at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore and she just grabbed the audience by the balls. "I just made a fool of myself. I love cracking up an audience," says Denise.

While her VJ predecessor Donita exuded sweetness, Denise growled with an in-your-face edginess that blazed the MTV screens.

My next Denise encounter was at the MTV Asia Awards after party, where I saw her wearing a smashing canary dress. I tapped her and asked what she was rocking.

Her sultry response, "YSL!" I love her!

Fast forward to this Super! shoot, I remind her of the incident, and she laughs at the anecdote and recalls the local press calling her "a yellow bird."

("The first time the media lamb
wearing," interjects Mel, her Si
To add another feather, so
flew to Manila to scream "Ma
at Plains & Prints, where she
your-face beauty, Gretchen B,
"I used to be so edgy and
have found the midpoint n
more mellow," she shares; d
rent mindset while expressi
jumpstarting a career here i
"I really like it here. I fee
cause the people are so warn
What else? She owns tw
fencing to relieve stress. Do
candy won't poke you in the

The thing about fame is that... It's another four letter word

The thing I love most about what I do is... that I laugh at myself

People might be surprised to know that... I cook a mean sauerkraut!

The most important thing I've ever learned is that... life is a journey.

I wish when I started off I've been told to... stop fidgeting.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was... slipping off a catwalk, losing a stilletto and falling on my face.

And what this taught to me was... not to fall off a catwalk, lose a stilletto and not fall on my face!!!

The secret to happines is... laughter.

My best ever outfit consisted of... Plains and Prints!

My Super! Saturday night consists of... playing with my 2 pussies! (cats)

The soundtrack to my life would include... Bob Marley, Depeche Mode, Kylie, and The Muppet Show

If I was invisible for a day, I would... be the most powerful superhero.

If I was the most powerful person on earth... I would save all the endangered animals and feed the world.

The best thing about my family is that... it keeps me grounded.

When I'm gone they'll probably say... come back!!!

If money was no option... the world would be a better place.

When I retire, I would like... to finger-paint Tuscany.

The world would be a much better place if... we could could communicate in one language, LOVE.

My hero is... Mahatma Gandhi.

The thing that makes my life worth living is... life itself.

My greatest hope for the future is... to be happy.

The worst thing somebody said about me was... that I was anorexic. Have you seen how much I eat!?

My favorite moments are when... I meet new people, e.g. being here in Manila—*MABUHAY!*

My most embarrassing moment was when... I had my period while shooting an MTV show in a white outfit.

I'm saving up for... my next wacky generation.

My biggest indulg
Les Trapessieus shoe

My current state of
AKO!!!

If someone would
biopic it would be... A

My five favorite wo
mabuhay, rockstar, fa
peace.

I aspire to be... the b

OPEN MARC. Marc Abaya of Kjwan

100%. Sugarfree

SWEET, SEXY, SING. Hannah of Session Road

RIVER RUNS DEEP. Rico Blanco

PAROKYA ni Edgar's Chito Miranda

SESSION Road—rules!

Cooler by the dozen

THREE HOURS OF ACOUSTIC MUSIC.

Three hours of alternative rock with True Faith, Imago and Session Road.

Four hours of rock with Sugarfree, Parokya ni Edgar, Kjwan and Rivermaya.

Two hours of pop and RnB.

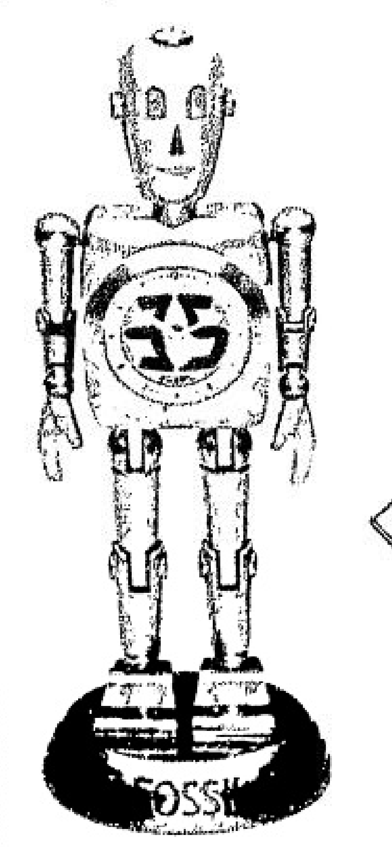
But the audience enjoyed so much more than just the music at Astring-O-Sol's 12th Hour Concert. Twelve of them won fun prizes including Zippo Lighters, Nestea gift packs, Kickers shirts, Dickies shades from Ideal Vision, free beer, free entrance at Embassy and gift certificates from Go Nuts Donuts and Arrow. One girl even won a trip for two to Boracay.

They also tried Astring-O-Sol Ice at a Fresh Breath station that had been set up. There were also Nescafe Ice and Nescafe Classic sample booths.

That's 12 hours of music, 12 performances from twelve bands, 12 raffle draws, 12 hours of live text chat, one cool party.

Everybo

TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSE
they're still dancing.
The Maneouvres celebrates 2
stomping years with a dance co
at 7 p.m. at the Main Theater of



FOSSIL'S range of big, big time pieces

Go big time

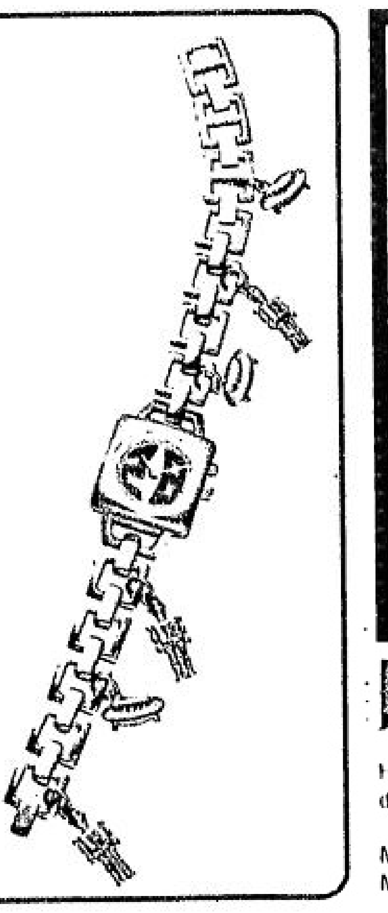
JUST LIKE US, FOSSIL KNOWS THAT size does matter.

Since 1984, the watch has been creating timepieces that are both functional and fashionable. Animated watch dials, fashion straps, crystals, leather cuff watches—these fill pages of Fossil's history of innovation.

Fossil once again sets the standard by introducing The Big Tic—Fossil's timepieces that feature the patented Big Tic motion technology of animated dials for men and women.

The watch has been flying off shelves all over the world, thanks to its spokesperson, Stan the Big Tic Robot.

Fossil's new Big Tic watch is available at the Fossil Store at Glorietta 4 and all L-Time Studio Branches. Get free entrance to Embassy on all Saturdays of September when you wear your Fossil watch.



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as a VJ

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to speak, Denise
uhay" to the folks
joins another in-
as an endorser.
intense, I think I
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scribing her cur-
g her interest in
the Philippines.
so welcome be-
n."
o cats and does
't worry, this eye
eye.

nce is... a pair of

mind is... *MASAYA*

lay me in my
ngelina Jolie.
rds are...
aabulous, love and

est in everything I do.

'Masaya ako!!!'

My Super! Saturday night consists of ... playing with my 2 pussies!

Photography:
MARK NICDAO
Concept & Styling:
MILLET ARZAGA
Makeup: XENG ZULUETA
for Shu Uemura
Hair: JANET DE RAMA
Sittings editor:
DAVID MILAN

dy dance now

) AND
) feet
cert tonight
P Diliman.

Witness the evolution of street dance as the all male dance group display their fancy footwork with the best school based dance groups in the country.

Ready? Ah 5, 6, 7, 8 ...

ight and Bublé

COMES ANOTHER
of the Bublé.
nadian performer
ael Bublé will be back in
ia on Oct. 12 for a concert at the Araneta Coliseum. For tickets, call Ticketnet at 911-5555, visit SM Ticketnet outlets or go to the Araneta Coliseum Box Office.

Click click bang bang

FROM SEPT. 30 TO OCT. 2, SOME OF the country's boldfaced names in the field of photography will hold an exhibit called "Face: A Depiction of Women in Society" at the Rockwell Tent in Makati. Be there to see the awesome works of Xander Angeles, Wig Tysman, Romy Vitug, Edwin Tuyay, Ibarra Deri, Angie Da Silva, Donald Tapan, Sonny Yabao, Chito Vecina, Ben Razon, Derek Soriano, Joe Galves, Jun Barrameda, Willy Avila, Toto Tarroza, Mon Acasio, Gil Nartea, Dominique James and George Tapan.

One of the main draws of the three-day PDI Foto Expo: Digital Weekend, this exhibit is perfect for pros and aspiring shutterbugs.

Entrance to the expo and the exhibit is free. We repeat, free. Call Chito Vecina at 0917-8554195 or Themes and Motifs at 3719783 for more details. Turn this mutha out, Super! peeps!

Gino de la Paz

No Need
To Go Farther.
↓

The Manors
Take the New San Pedro Exit

Now only ten minutes from Alabang via the new San Pedro exit,
you don't have to go far when going home to THE MANORS.

This family-friendly neighborhood offers breath-taking vistas of Laguna de Bay, the cool refreshing breezes and the rolling terrain that makes living in here an experience you'd want to share with your family. Plus the added advantage of having easy access to schools, hospitals, business, leisure and recreational facilities.

Come home to THE MANORS. And discover the joys of spending more time at home than on the road.

Want to know more? Call 772-2745 or 868-5960.

Actual Photo of Country Daphne House Model
161 sqm. usable floor area

LICENSE TO SELL NO. 12588 R-4A-05-09

Come to our
GRAND OPEN HOUSE
on Sept. 25, 9:00 am onwards
and get up to 15% discount!

HOW TO GET THERE: From San Pedro exit, turn right at Magsaysay road. Continue straight until you reach South Peak gate.

The Manors
at SOUTH PEAK

A quality project of
CORTE BELLA
The Metro Homes Division of
FILINVEST LAND, INC.
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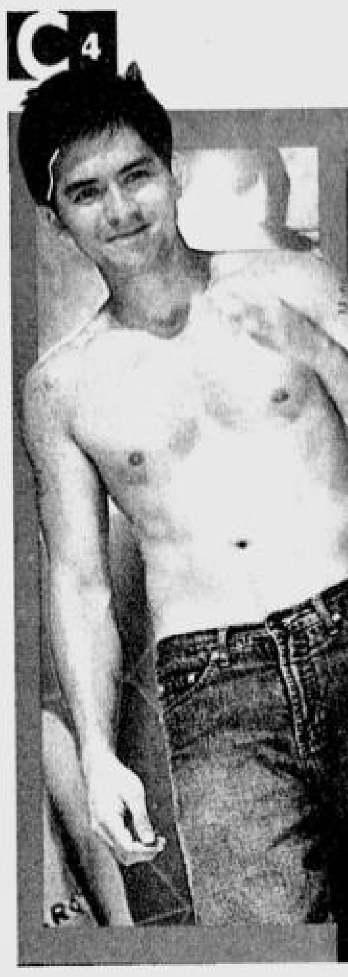
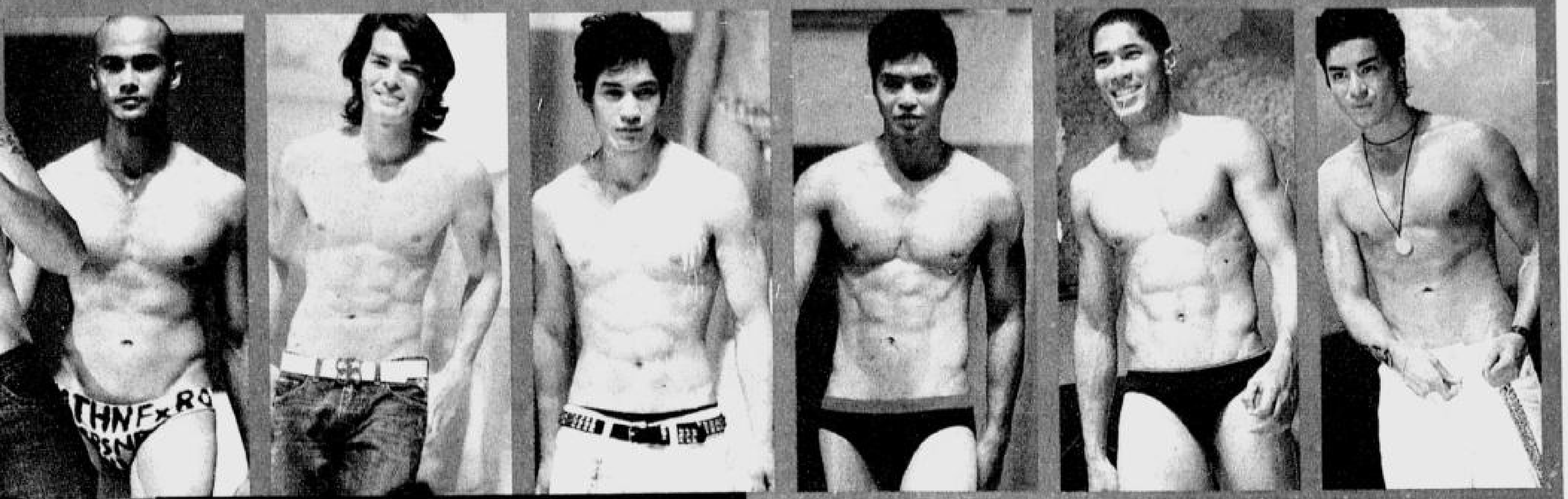


LOW RISE DENNIS... Trillo



CARE FOR A SIX PACK? William Devaughn, Kenyiro Yonekura, Victor Basa, Zanjoe Marudo, Iago Raterta, and Alvin Alfonso

Holy Jockstraps!

THOSE FUN, FEARLESS FEMALES OVER AT Cosmopolitan magazine sure know how to show off their men! Last Sept. 8, 2005, Cosmo's annual Bachelor Bash had their hot centerfolds sauntering down a stairway from heaven, to a crowd of screaming ladies. Check out the 10 hot celebrities, plus 69 more delicious bachelors around town in Cosmo's September 2005 issue, welcoming Ianne Evangelista at the helm as the new EIC.

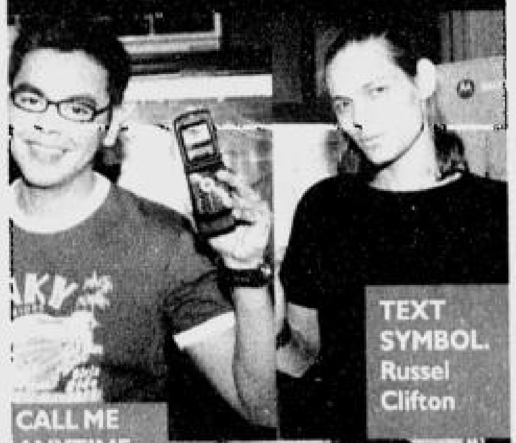
IN-HOUSE CHEF. Godskitchen DJ Tall Paul and his Motorola

Cooking up mobile history

MOTOROLA'S NEWEST OFFERING—THE E680i, a definite pleaser and a perfect match for the audiophiles in the world played chef at last season's Godskitchen party.

In his element was DJ Tall Paul, ranked 19th DJ of the world and the night's biggest draw. Organizers Team Big Fish and God Squad willingly raised club land experience to the next level.

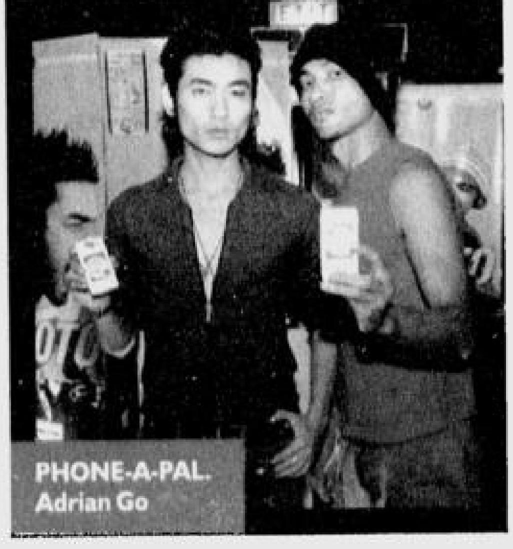
Just as Motorola redefines the mobile lifestyle through music and multimedia entertainment, Godskitchen equally defied the parameters of music and clubbing through this unrivaled party.



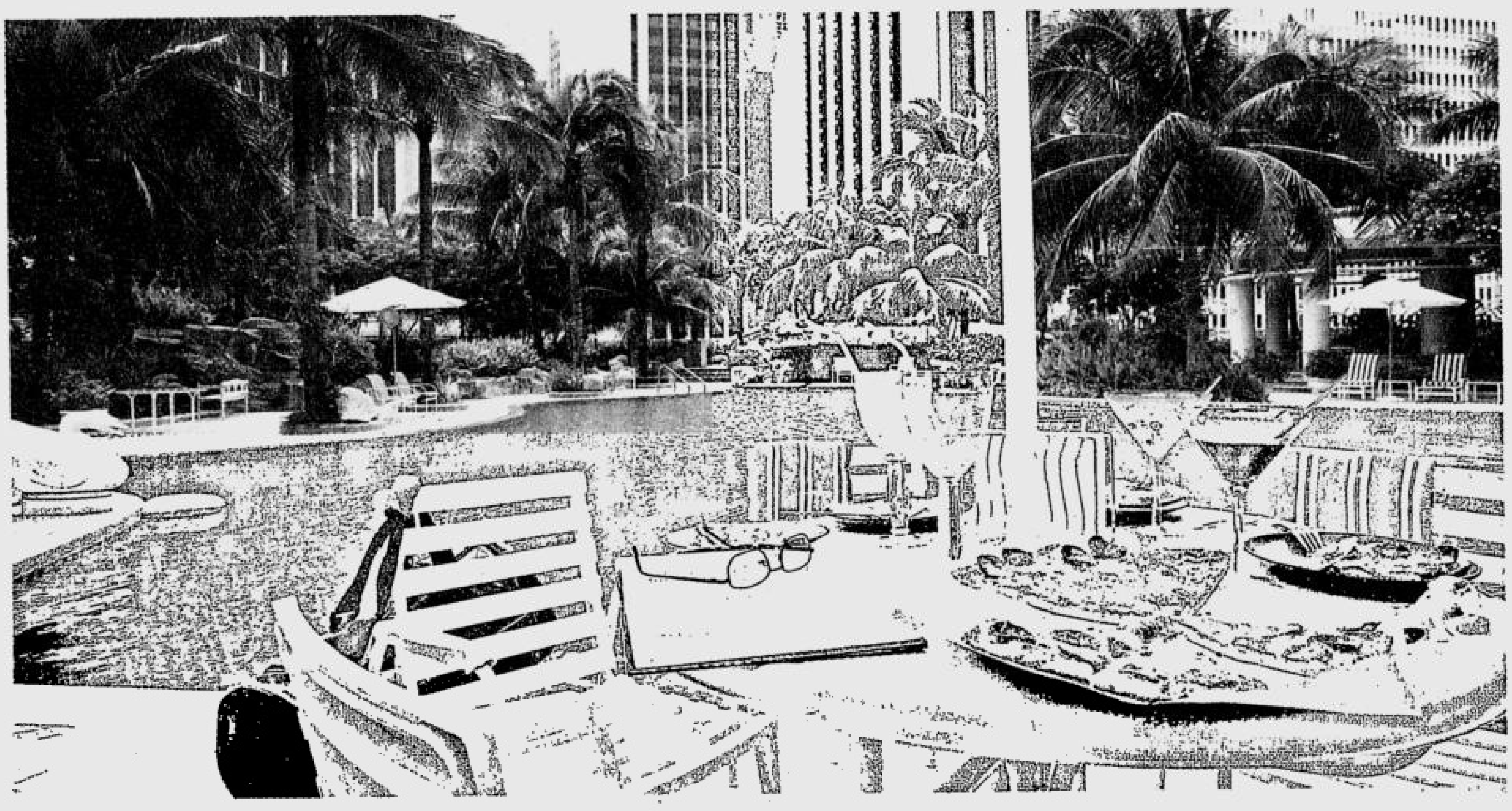
CALL ME ANYTIME. JM Rodriguez

TEXT SYMBOL. Russel Clifton

HOTLINE. Motorola girls



PHONE-A-PAL. Adrian Go



It's 5 in the afternoon,
and Maria finds herself on the stationary bike,
completely trapped in the third chapter of her new novel.
Ramon, struggling to keep his balance on the stepper
is going on his 29th minute.
Not bad for a 65 year old couple, on their daily gym ritual,
at their condominium, right in the middle of Greenbelt.

Suddenly, their grandchildren,
rush across the Podium and burst into the gym.
"I want to swim Lolo!", screams Luisa the 4 year old.
"We're hungry Lola!", shout the rest. "Let's go down for pizza!"

They look at each other and smile.
Maria whispers, "You do realize that
we're the most popular grandparents on the planet,
don't you Ramon?" He agrees.

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AT GREENBELT

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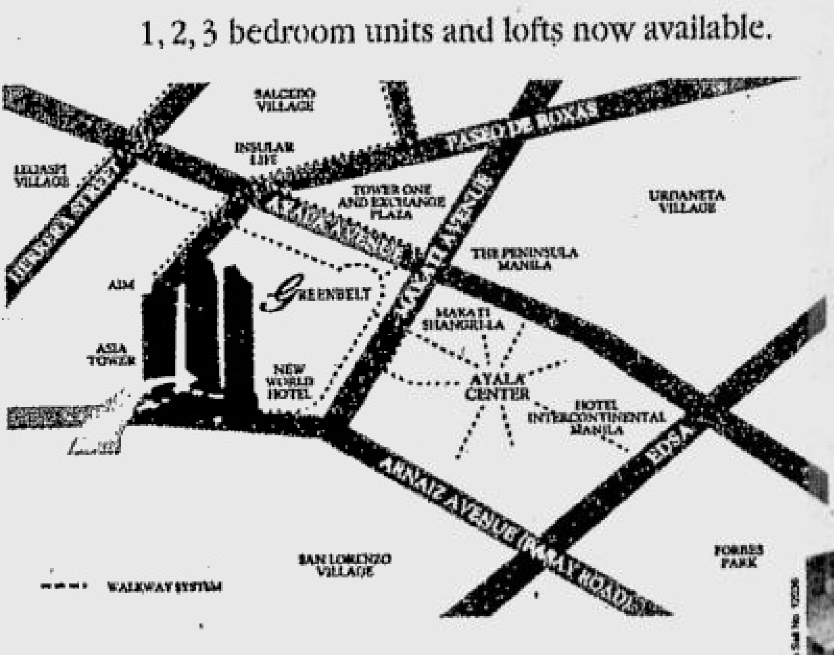

SALCEDO VILLAGE
LEGASPI VILLAGE
INSULAR LIFE
PASEO DE ROXAS
HERRERA STREET
AYALA AVENUE
MAKATI AVENUE
TOWER ONE AND EXCHANGE PLAZA
URDANETA VILLAGE
THE PENINSULA MANILA
AIM
GREENBELT
MAKATI SHANGRI-LA
ASIA TOWER
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PHOTOS BY LJ LAUDICO

Thrill! Chill! Brazil!!!

Welcome to where it all happens for every pleasure-seeking, wanderlust-driven, adventure-infused soul

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

THE LIST OF THINGS TO DO could've been torn out from a chapter of the Hedonist's Handbook. Traipse along Atlantic coastlines donning nothing but Havaianas and a dental floss bikini; sip ultra-potent *caipirinhas* for brunch; samba wildly to infectious, powerful percussion beats that go on forever; join frenzied football fans bedecked in green and yellow screaming "*Gol!!!!!!!*" as their team scores against a humbled South American rival; play Capoeira with old masters once descended from African slaves; surf perfect waves on waters embraced by lush-green hillsides; indulge in harmless flirtations with a lifespan lasting only 'til the sunrise.

Welcome to where it all happens for every pleasure-seeking, wanderlust-driven, adventure-infused soul... Brasil!

A three-letter word

As every trip is a personal journey for the traveler, my Brazilian sojourn had over the years evolved from a hedonistic dream of passing out piss-drunk on the streets of Rio while getting trampled on by crazed Carnaval dancers, into something much deeper and, yes, I'd dare say even spiritual. Call it age, or wisdom, or sheer delusion, but my long-awaited trip to Brazil had in fact become an attempt to discover the meaning of a three-letter word: "Axé." Roll it off your tongue like smooth chocolate, baby: "ah-shaay." It is a Brazilian word meaning a divine energy that brings forth good luck and positivity; a magic force that moves all things in the universe according to old African religions in Brazil. I first heard about it from my Capoeira professor in Manila when he urged his students to "give Axé to your friend."

So I loaded my backpack and jumped out the window once again to roam around Brazil, guided by my inner compass and the spirit of spontaneity, with nothing to lose—okay, except a year's worth of savings and bits of my soul, already scattered along the sands stuck on the bronzed asses of sun worshippers along Ipanema Beach.

Cities sexy to sublime

Brazil is cultural kaleidoscope that shifts from city to city, state to state. Rio de Janeiro, "The Marvelous City" is sexy and scintillating, blessed with beautiful beaches, shaped mountains, and perhaps the biggest population of exposed, tanned female asses in the world. It was acid-trippy to walk down the city streets on a Saturday, seeing men, women, and half-men/women languidly strolling about, buying lunch or their groceries wearing nothing but their skivvies. The sight would give ultra-

THRILL/ D3

ASS YOU like it

AFRO-DISIAC. Clowning around in Rio

THIS chick comes free with a dragon tattoo.

BIKINI

FLIP flop hooray! Havaianas for sale at like, every corner.

CHRIST, someone is stoned.

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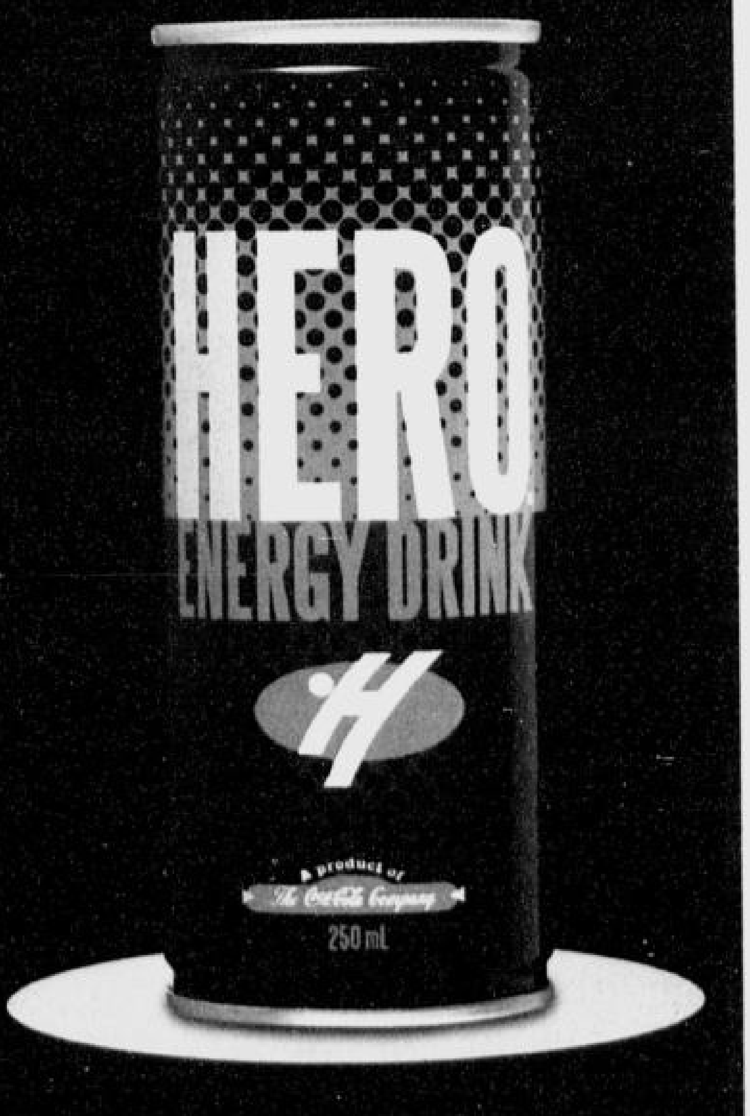
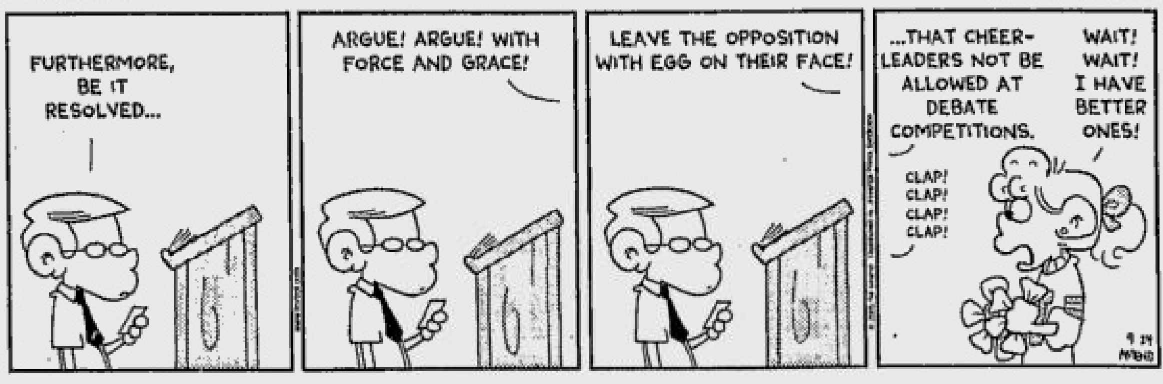
'Yan ang kailangan mo para umasenso. Kaya nandito ang Hero Energy Drink.
Solid ang tama, with ingredients that help restore physical and mental energy.
At sa sarap na sakto sa panlasa't bulsa, sa'n ka pa?



NEW FROM THE COCA COLA COMPANY.

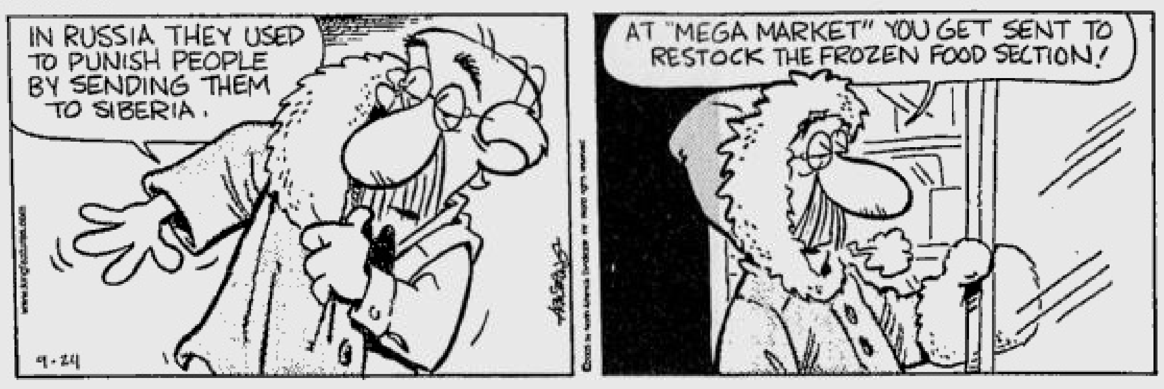
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


FURTHERMORE, BE IT RESOLVED...
ARGUE! ARGUE! WITH FORCE AND GRACE!
LEAVE THE OPPOSITION WITH EGG ON THEIR FACE!
...THAT CHEERLEADERS NOT BE ALLOWED AT DEBATE COMPETITIONS.
CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!
WAIT! WAIT! I HAVE BETTER ONES!

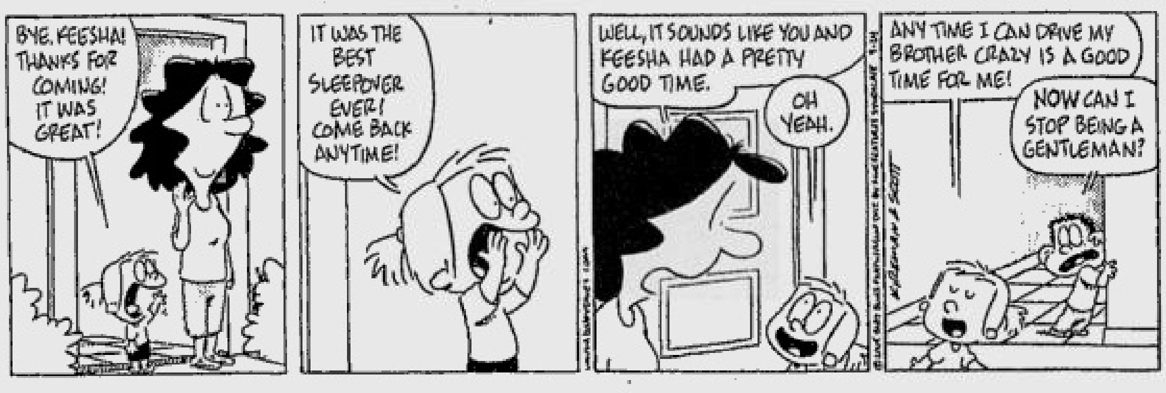
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


IN RUSSIA THEY USED TO PUNISH PEOPLE BY SENDING THEM TO SIBERIA.
AT "MEGA MARKET" YOU GET SENT TO RESTOCK THE FROZEN FOOD SECTION!
9-24

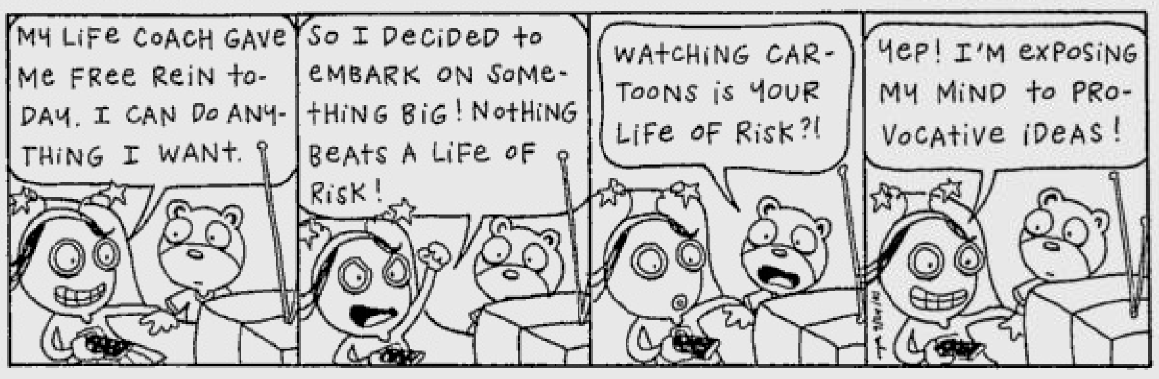
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


BYE, KEESHA! THANKS FOR COMING! IT WAS GREAT!
IT WAS THE BEST SLEEPOVER EVER! COME BACK ANYTIME!
WELL, IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU AND KEESHA HAD A PRETTY GOOD TIME.
OH YEAH.
ANY TIME I CAN DRIVE MY BROTHER CRAZY IS A GOOD TIME FOR ME!
NOW CAN I STOP BEING A GENTLEMAN?

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


My Life Coach Gave Me Free Rein to-day. I Can Do Anything I Want.
So I Decided to Embark on Something Big! Nothing Beats a Life of Risk!
Watching Cartoons is Your Life of Risk?!
Yep! I'm Exposing My Mind to Provocative Ideas!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're personally concerned with what is right and what is wrong. You want to be understood. You are honest and financially astute. Others know they can rely on you. You need people in your life. You don't like to do things alone. Work very hard to build and construct something this year. It's important.
Birthdate of: Kevin Sorbo, actor; Jim Henson, Muppet creator; Nia Vardalos, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a very poor day to discuss how to share or divide something. For some reason, you have Vaseline on your lens. You're not seeing clearly.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today you tend to see things as you want them to be rather than how they actually are. (Sometimes we prefer to live with our illusions. Nevertheless, they're just illusions.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A co-worker might disappoint you today. But you have to ask yourself if your expectations were realistic. Sometimes we unwittingly set ourselves up for disappointment—no?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Lovers' quarrels and disappointments in romance are likely today. One thing is certain: Unexpressed expectations always lead to disappointment. Be clear about what you want.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Confusion about domestic issues, especially about how to decorate or fix up your place, is likely today. This could be the case of too many cooks spoiling the stew.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Don't worry if a large part of this day is lost to daydreaming and wool gathering. You can't help it. However, be aware that conversations are subject to confusion—even deception.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You love beautiful things. Today you want to spend money on something beautiful and luxurious. Is this wise? If you have any doubts—don't do it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Family relationships are so confusing now that you might break something off or suffer from a breakdown in a relationship. This is a poor time to do this. You don't have all the facts.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be extra-clear in all your communications with siblings and relatives. Some of your conversations are going to be like two ships passing in the night. Be careful.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be careful about making important financial decisions related to friends or groups. You might not have the full picture. You could be kidding yourself. Possibly, someone else is kidding you!

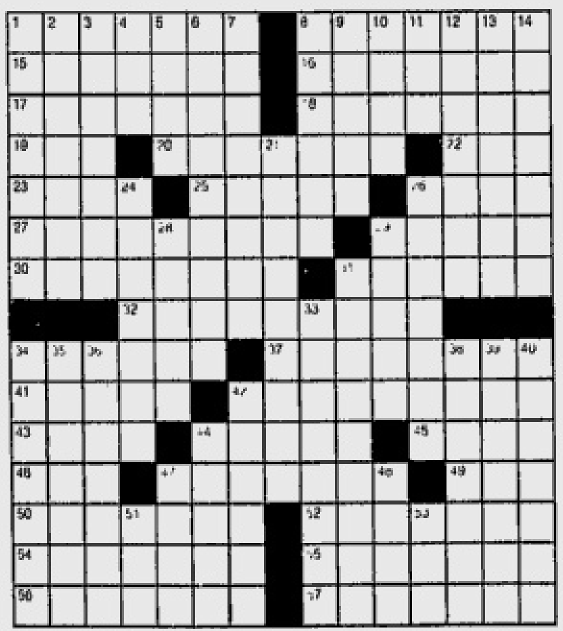
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Think twice before you speak to bosses and influential people today. What you say could be misunderstood. Alternatively, you might misunderstand what others say.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Wishful thinking does not make it so. Do not get swept up by some ideology, religion or political idea today. Keep your feet on the ground.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Sprint winner
8 Beaming
15 Muse of music
16 New World lizards
17 Deepens a waterway
18 Constituent base of nucleic acid
19 "__ the land of the free..."
20 Paige of baseball
22 NYC opera house
23 Vex
25 Public disturbances
26 Is the proper size
27 Monongahela joiner
29 Ski slope with densely packed snow
30 Superlatively squalid
31 Bills of fare
32 Thankfulness
34 Looked upon
37 Gave an account of
41 Sharif and Epps
42 Most important
43 Highland maiden
44 Toots
45 Bannister's famous run
46 Bank payt.
47 Long-eared hounds
49 Track circuit
50 Most conceited
52 Wanderers
54 Repeat oneself
55 Eat greedily
56 Added bubbles to
57 Determined

DOWN
1 Soft felt hats
2 Halo
3 Fruitless
4 Mack or Williams
5 Work units
6 Lead, as a movement
7 Most short-tempered
8 Southpaw's opposite
9 Malarial fevers
10 Binary
11 McKellen of "The Lord of the Rings"
12 Tree-hugger, of a sort
13 Actress Fabray
14 Nagana carriers
21 Carries on
24 Financial records
26 Pistol or rifle
28 Sugar-and-spice creations
29 Military chaplain
31 Sidewalk edge unit
33 Interfered harmfully
34 Sucre land
35 Issue from a source
36 More impetuous
38 Ryder painting, "__ of the Sea"
39 Expand
40 Sunken, as eyes
42 Made a home
44 Sew loosely
47 Kerouac's generation
48 Roman-fleuve
51 C. Heston's org.
53 Up-to-date, for short


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57

By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH
9/24/05

Friday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	E	R		S	A	L	A	D		S	A	N	G
P	U	R	E		E	C	O	N	O		P	R	O	W
E	X	S	P	E	A	R	M	I	N	T	A	L	L	Y
S	E	T	S	F	R	E	E		O	H	I	O	A	N
				F	E	S		C	H	I	N			
R	A	F	T	E	D		M	O	A	N		I	D	I
E	C	L	A	T		S	A	D	R		A	D	E	N
T	H	Y	M	E	I	M	M	E	M	O	R	I	A	L
I	O	N	S		N	I	B	S		V	I	O	L	A
E	O	N		E	T	T	A		B	E	A	T	T	Y
			A	C	E	S		B	U	R				
E	L	I	N	O	R		S	A	R	D	I	N	I	A
B	A	S	I	L	M	E	T	A	B	O	L	I	S	M
O	V	A	L		I	W	I	L	L		I	L	I	E
N	A	Y	S		T	E	R	S	E		A	S	S	N

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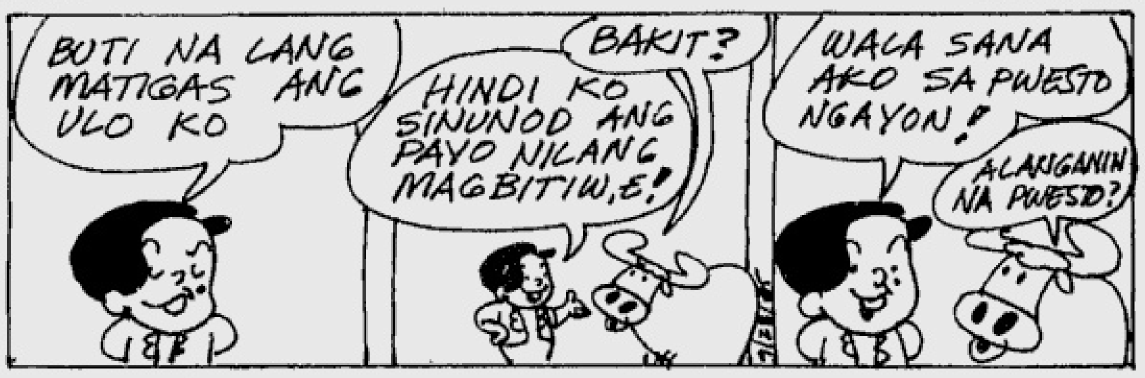
9/24/05

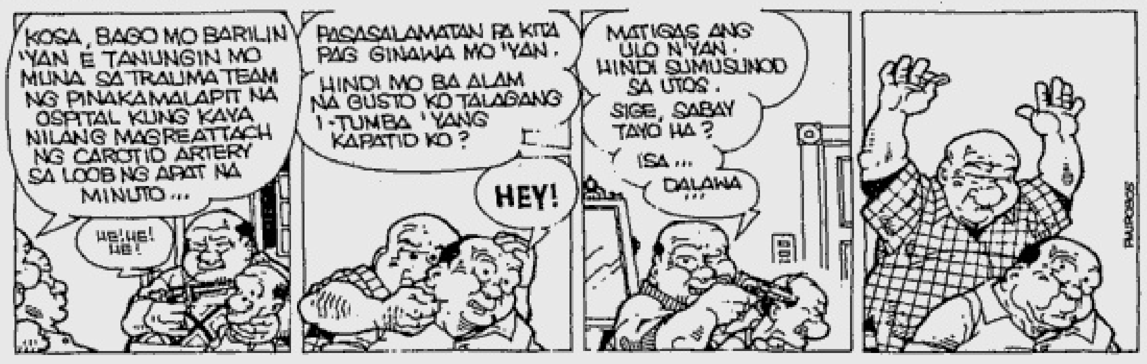
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BUTI NA LANG MATIGAS ANG ULO KO
BAKIT?
HINDI KO SINUNOD ANG PAYO NILANG MAGBITIW, E!
WALA SANA AKO SA PWESTO NGAYON!
ALANGANIN NA PWESTO?

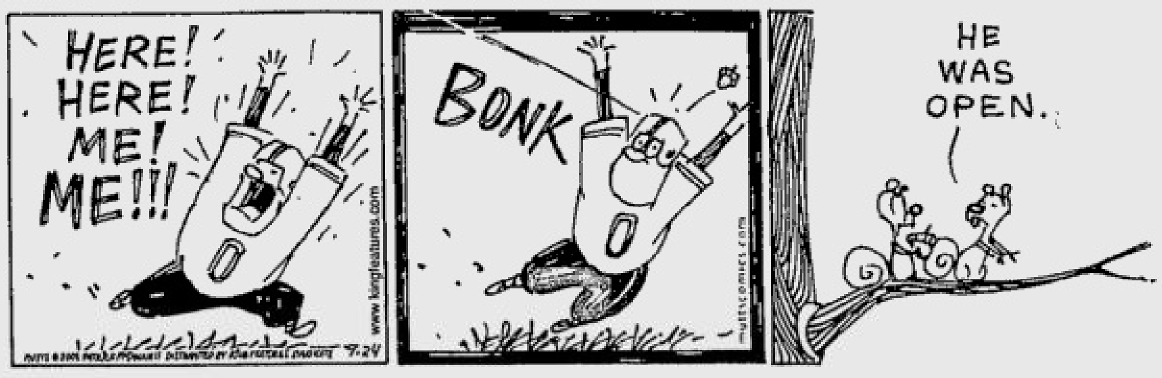
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KOSA, BAGO MO BARILIN 'YAN E TANUNGIN MO MUNA SA TRAUMA TEAM NG PINAKAMALAPIT NA OSPITAL KUNG KAYA NILANG MAGREATTACH NG CAROTID ARTERY SA LOOB NG APAT NA MINUTO...
HE! HE! HE!
PASASALAMATAN PA KITA PAG GINAWA MO 'YAN.
HINDI MO BA ALAM NA GUSTO KO TALAGANG I-TUMBA 'YANG KAPATID KO?
HEY!
MATIGAS ANG ULO N'YAN. HINDI SUMUSUNOD SA UTOS.
SIGE, SABAY TAYO HA?
ISA...
DALAWA...

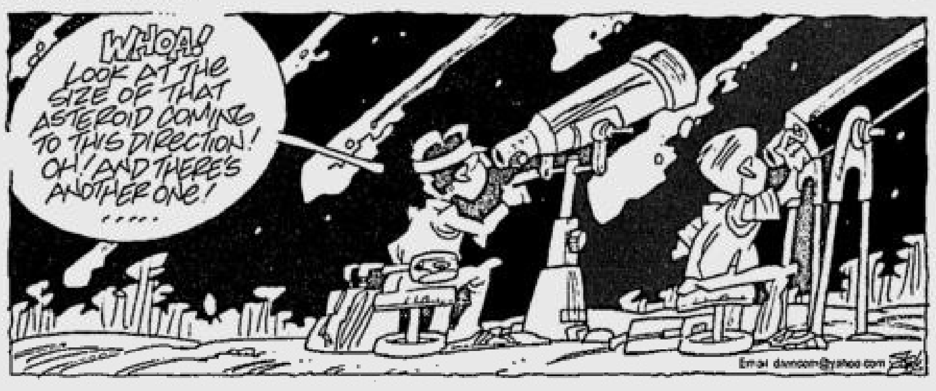
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HERE! HERE! ME! ME!!!
BONK
HE WAS OPEN.
9-24

DIVINE COMEDY

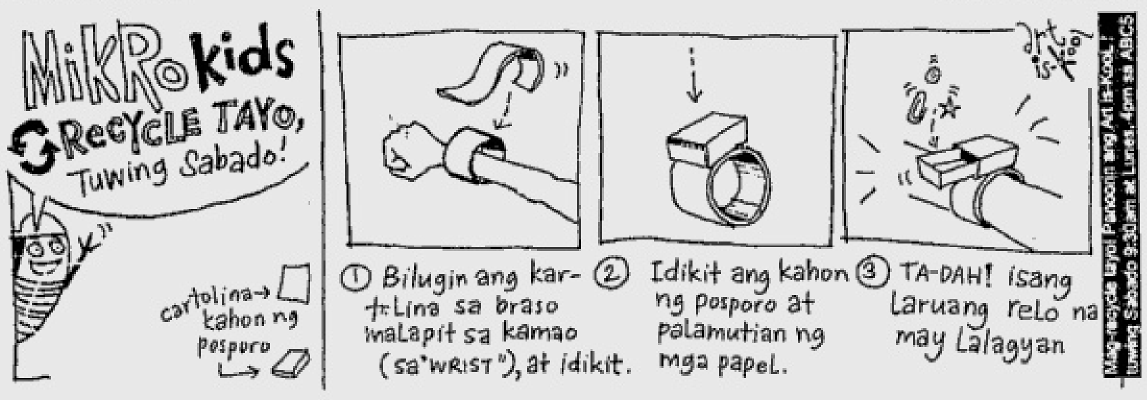
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHOA! LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT ASTEROID COMING TO THIS DIRECTION! OH! AND THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!
Email: divncom@yahoo.com

STAR-GAZING CLUB AND THE END OF THE WORLD

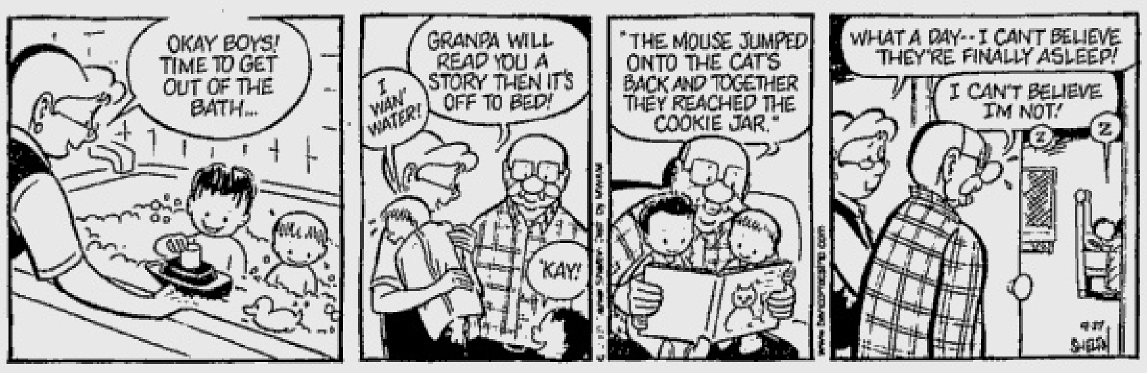
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRo kids
RecYCLE TAYO, Tuwing Sabado!
cartolina
kahon ng posporo
① Bilugin ang kar-tolina sa braso malapit sa kamao (sa "wrist"), at idikit.
② Idikit ang kahon ng posporo at palamutian ng mga papel.
③ TA-DAH! isang laruang relo na may lalagyan
Art is Kool
Mag-recycle tayo! Panoorin ang Art is Kool, tuwing Sabado 9:30am at Lunes 4pm sa ABC5

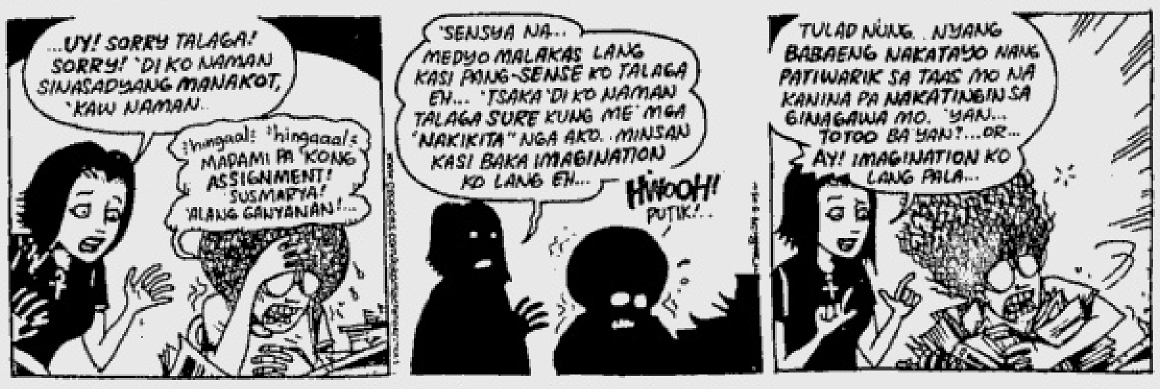
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OKAY BOYS! TIME TO GET OUT OF THE BATH...
I WAN' WATER!
GRANPA WILL READ YOU A STORY THEN IT'S OFF TO BED!
'KAY!
"THE MOUSE JUMPED ONTO THE CAT'S BACK AND TOGETHER THEY REACHED THE COOKIE JAR."
WHAT A DAY--I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE FINALLY ASLEEP!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M NOT!
Z Z

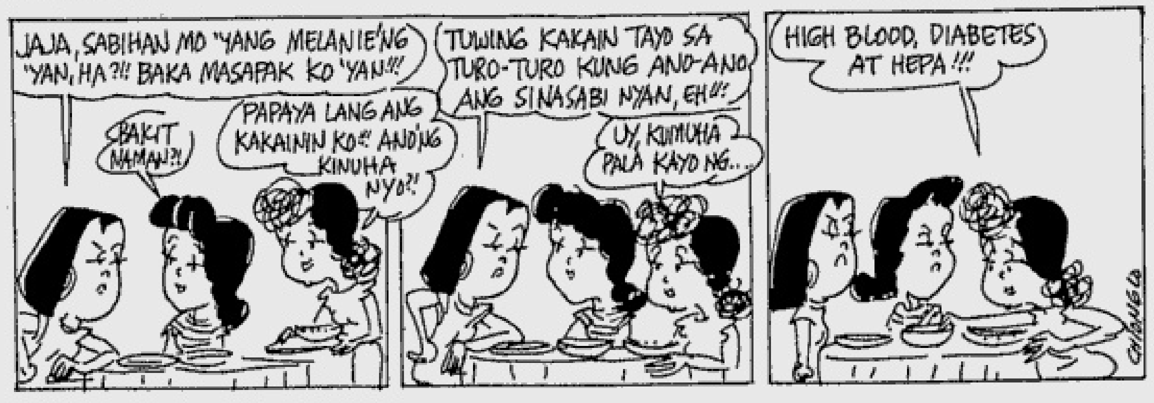
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


...UY! SORRY TALAGA! SORRY! 'DI KO NAMAN SINASADYANG MANAKOT, 'KAW NAMAN.
hingaal! *hingaaal!* MADAMI PA 'KONG ASSIGNMENT! SUSMARYA! 'ALANG GANYANAN!...
'SENSYA NA... MEDYO MALAKAS LANG KASI PANG-SENSE KO TALAGA EH... 'TSAKA 'DI KO NAMAN TALAGA SURE KUNG ME' MGA "NAKIKITA" NGA AKO. MINSAN KASI BAKA IMAGINATION KO LANG EH...
HWOOH! PUTIK!..
TULAD NUNG... NYANG BABAENG NAKATAYO NANG PATIWARIK SA TAAS MO NA KANINA PA NAKATINGIN SA GINAGAWA MO. 'YAN... TOTOO BA 'YAN?...OR... AY! IMAGINATION KO LANG PALA...

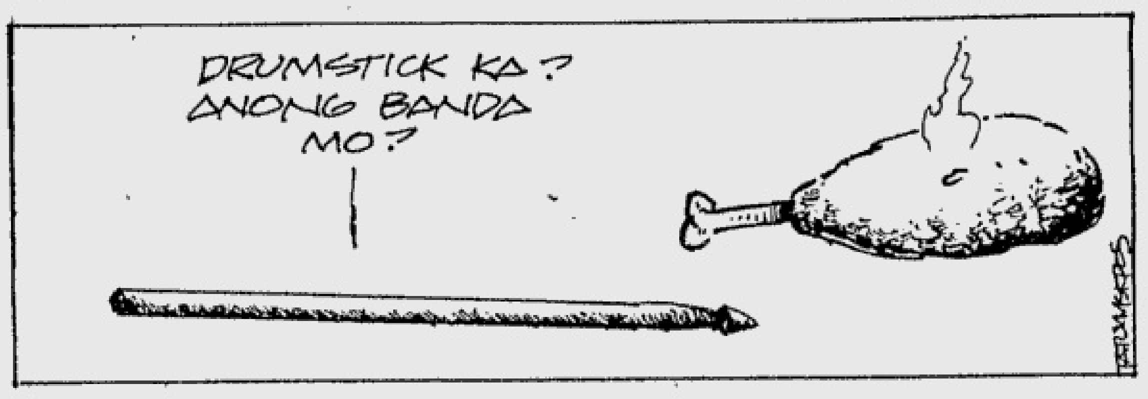
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, SABIHAN MO 'YANG MELANIE'NG 'YAN, HA?!! BAKA MASAPAK KO 'YAN!!!
BAKIT NAMAN?!
PAPAYA LANG ANG KAKAININ KO!! ANO'NG KINUHA NYO?!
TUWING KAKAIN TAYO SA TURO-TURO KUNG ANO-ANO ANG SINASABI NYAN, EH!!
UY, KUMUHA PALA KAYO NG...
HIGH BLOOD, DIABETES AT HEPA!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DRUMSTICK KA? ANONG BANDA MO?

Thrill! Chill! Brazil!!!

From page D1

HIGH-flying instructor Fantasma of Capoeira

IPANEMA beach boys: my buddies LJ Laudico and Sherman Valera

conservative religious Catholics a heart attack, if not for the famed Cristo Redentor statue atop Corcovado watching peaceably over it all.

Yet the Brazil of my lifetime's imagination was captured most in the northeastern city of Salvador in Bahia, where the first African slaves were shipped in by the Portuguese colonizers to work in the sugar plantations back in the 16th century. Salvador is a steamy, sensual cocktail of a city: Imagine powerful, Afro-Brazilian music permeating through the brightly painted windows and into the cobblestone streets, Capoeira performers offering a visual display of dance and acrobatics by old churches, and traditionally dressed Bahian women peddling barbecued meats and spicy seafood fare at every corner.

A few more notes on my traveler's journal: I then skipped to the capital city of Brasilia, envisioned to be the "City of the Third Millennium" with its ultra-modern architectural opuses, then headed south to sink my feet on the sand dunes and 42 unspoilt beaches of Ilha de Santa Catarina. Took a 17-hour bus ride west to have my jaw drop at the sight of the 275 waterfalls at Foz do Iguaçu sharing the border with Argentina and Paraguay. Headed back to the Atlantic side to catch a party in the superhip little surf town of Maresias, and partied with cooler-than-thou Paulistas on Brazil's Independence Day.

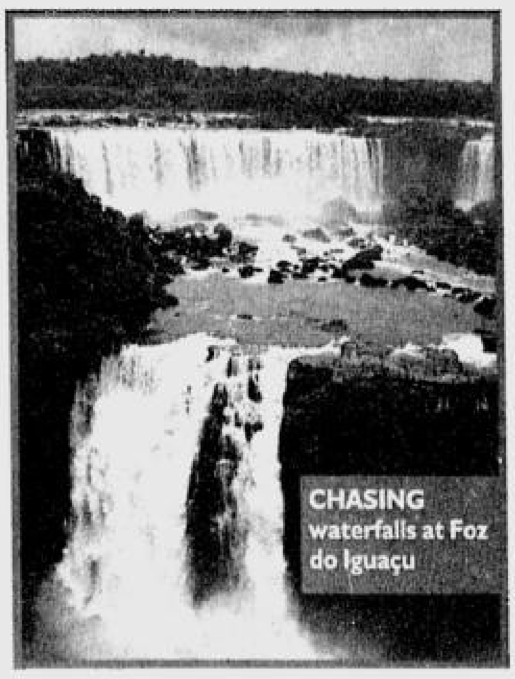
What's in the agua?

Then again, one could read similar stories in any Lonely Planet book. In truth, it's those singular traveler's tales, tucked like bookmarks in between the chapters of the guidebook clichés, that mark the difference and create the magic woven into reality. For me, above all else, the real landmark of Brazil is its people.

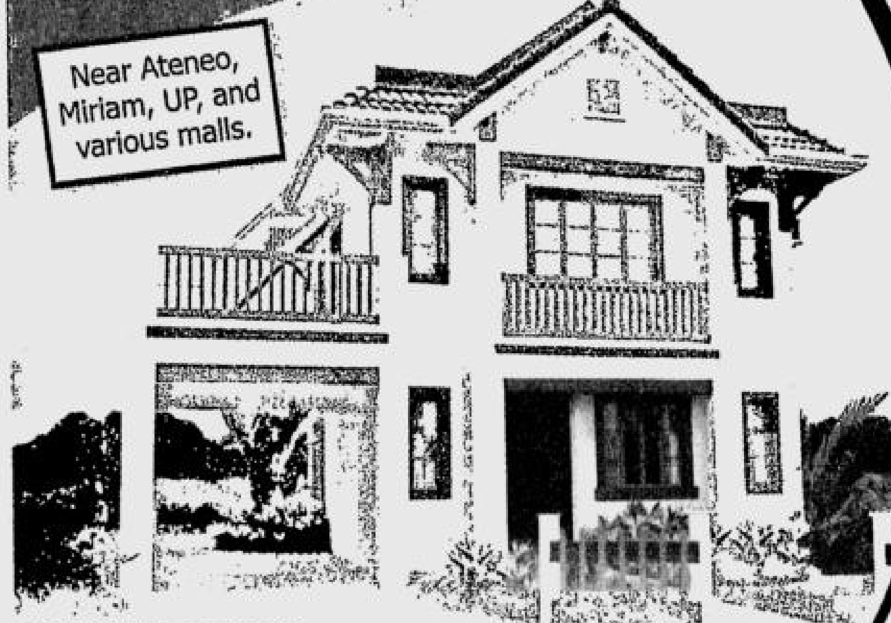
I wonder just what the heck is in the agua in this part of the world to breed what I now believe are the friendliest, most passionate, most patriotic, and coolest people I have ever encountered. Even the most jaded of all cynics will be softened. (Either that, or I was just really lucky for not getting mugged.)

There was a peanut vendor in Salvador who

THRILL/ D4



CHASING waterfalls at Foz do Iguaçu



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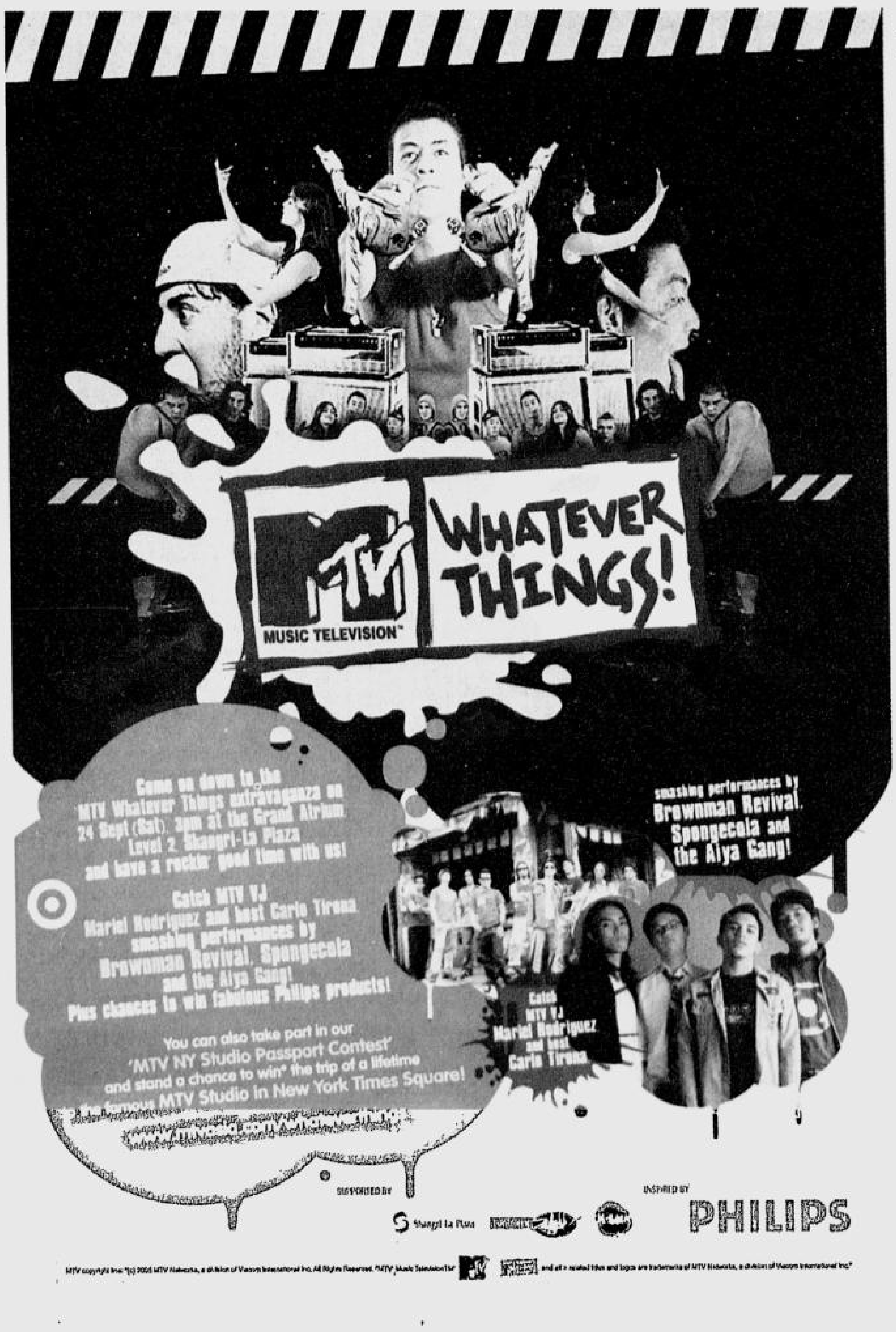

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Come on down to the MTV Whatever Things extravaganza on 24 Sept (Sat), 3pm at the Grand Atrium Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza and have a rockin' good time with us!

Catch MTV VJ Mariel Rodriguez and host Carlo Tirona, smashing performances by Brownman Revival, Spongecola and the Aiya Gang!
Plus chances to win fabulous Philips products!

You can also take part in our 'MTV NY Studio Passport Contest' and stand a chance to win* the trip of a lifetime to the famous MTV Studio in New York Times Square!

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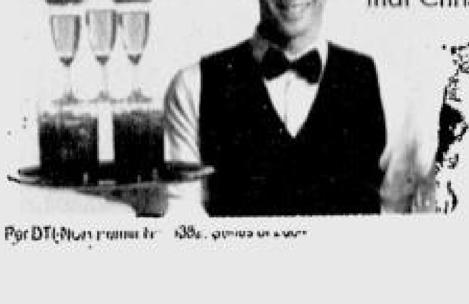

'M ORE TREATS FOR A MERRIER CHRISTMAS

With the 'brrrr' months upon us, the Yuletide season can't be far behind. And with the holidays comes the task of completing one's Christmas list, an undertaking which can be very daunting especially in these difficult times. But Christmas shopping need not be a stressful chore, especially when you start off on the right foot.

If you are privileged to own a Metrobank Credit Card, a way to de-stress your Christmas shopping is to take advantage of the perks that come with using your 'M Here card by buying gift items at 'M Here-specific boutiques all over the metro. Be the sweetest stocking-stuffer with freebies and discounts galore from boutiques such as Celine, Replay, MEMO and even more! For larger purchases (a television for Dad? A DVD player for your significant other? An MP3 player for yourself?), 'M Here cardholders can plug into the power of the perks from the country's largest appliance stores: Apple Center, BOSE, Avid, Abenson's and many others!

You've probably heard it before: never shop on an empty stomach. Many fall victim to excessive retail therapy due to hungry bellies, buying extra gifts 'just in case'. Before embarking on a holiday shopping spree, drop by your favorite restaurant or café and load up on some yummy for your tummy. Metrobank Credit Card holders can maximize their pre-shopping dining experience with their 'M Here card. To get a taste of the crème de la crème of the culinary crop at very affordable prices, flash your card at 'M Here-specific establishments for palatable privileges and perks. Sink your sweet tooth into a free serving of French macaroons from Bizu, load up on a free glass of red wine and dessert from Museum Café, feast on free dessert from Burgoo and so much more!

Most importantly, after a bout of budget-wrestling and gift-hunting, it is essential to reward yourself with an hour or two at a spa or wellness center. But these indulgences need not be expensive —'M Here cardholders get the most pampered and privileged deals from the country's premier wellness centers. Get free facial treatments from Clarity Aesthetic Center, a free back massage from the Urban Spa, as well as discounts galore from other health and beauty establishments located all over the metro! Christmas should be a season of cheer and good times, not holiday headaches. This early in the year, get into the holiday habit and check that Christmas list to stuff your loved ones' stockings, sans the stress and the hassle. Get ahead of the gift-giving game with your Metrobank Credit Card. When it comes to perks, privileges, discounts and freebies, there's Metrobank 'M Here.
Call 8-700-700 for more details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. [illegible] Series of 2005

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Thrill! Chill! Brazil!!!

From page D3

offered to buy my friend and I a round of beers, even if he looked as if he couldn't afford to buy his next meal. After only four days walking down the streets of Salvador, it already felt like home as the people we had met either in passing, in old music stores or artisan shops, called out our names and greeted us warmly each time. Before leaving, I said goodbye to a painter who picked out a postcard to give me as a souvenir: a picture of the mythical Yemanjá, Queen of the Sea.

Another bookmark is a nine-year-old girl in Brasilia who was so excited to meet people from "As Filipinas" that she introduced me to her mother, who whipped out a little notepad to ask me what "I love you" was in Tagalog. For that was her lifetime's prized collection—pages and pages of how to say "I love you" in different languages.

BEATS without borders in Salvador, Bahia

Even in those long, overnight bus rides, I was still astounded by such extraordinary warmth of the passengers who talked animatedly to each other, strangers but a minute before, as if they were lifelong friends. Once, an old man sitting in front of me noticed me drinking a guarana soft drink in one stop, and in the next station, bought me a can of the same brand only because he saw me having one a few hours before.

On my first afternoon in Floripa in Southern Brasil, I somehow ended up smoking among the homeless while watching the sunset. They were the ragamuffins of the city who festooned my arms with bracelets that read "100% Ilha da Magia" (Island of Magic), and wanted nothing in return but my "Amisade" or "Friendship."

Another day, alone on the shore, I was watching surfers ripping the waves of Praia Mole on the Island of Santa Catarina. Two Brazilian surfers who spoke zero English came up to me and in spite of knowing that I was just in transit, still treated me to fruit shakes and beers as their welcome.

On my last few days, I partied with the cooler-than-thou kids of Sao Paulo who shoved me into clubs and raves with them (without me shedding a centavo) on the eve of their Independence Day.

Hello, good vibes!

In all my years of wandering about this beautiful planet, I only realized in this trip that I've crossed paths with people whom I may never encounter again in this lifetime, yet somehow form a part of me that can never be taken away. It made me ruminate on what really matters most in life. Wealth, Power or Fame? Indeed, redefined as the wealth of experience, the power of friendship, and the fame of stories told and retold as the years go by. For some reason, and without wonder, a line in the bossa nova song "Agua de Beber" sung by Astrud Gilberto kept replaying in my head to sum up my journey: *"Abri todas as portas do coração."* (I opened all the doors of my heart).

So have I found out the meaning of "Axé"? It was more than a discovery, but an intense feeling—of a powerful energy spread with hellos and good vibes.

Oh caption, my caption!

SUPER!'S CAPTION: Blowin' bananas

By Gino de la Paz and Tals Diaz

WHOA. TIME TO DUST THIS baby off! In the span of time we were away, like, somewhere, several things have taken place in our little pop culture *kanto*. Britney Spears has finally popped out her Federletus (Federline fetus, get it?), a baby boy who we're sure will grow up to be a fine piece of white trash. Jack Osbourne has lost weight the equivalent of one Olsen twin. And Kate Moss... Uhm, Kate, you were just... STUPID.

So what does this have to do with this week's photo? Apparently, even stranger things have happened in The 'Pinas especially in The Senate, *po*. Yeah, Secretary Norberto Gonzales, *po* knows a thing or two about going apesh*t. So, like, can you peel it? If you can, or even if you can't and just missed us, e-mail your most random captions to super@inquirer.com.ph. Remember, as *Ate* Gwen Stefani once said, this sh*t is bananas, B-A-N-A-N-A-S. *O-ha*!

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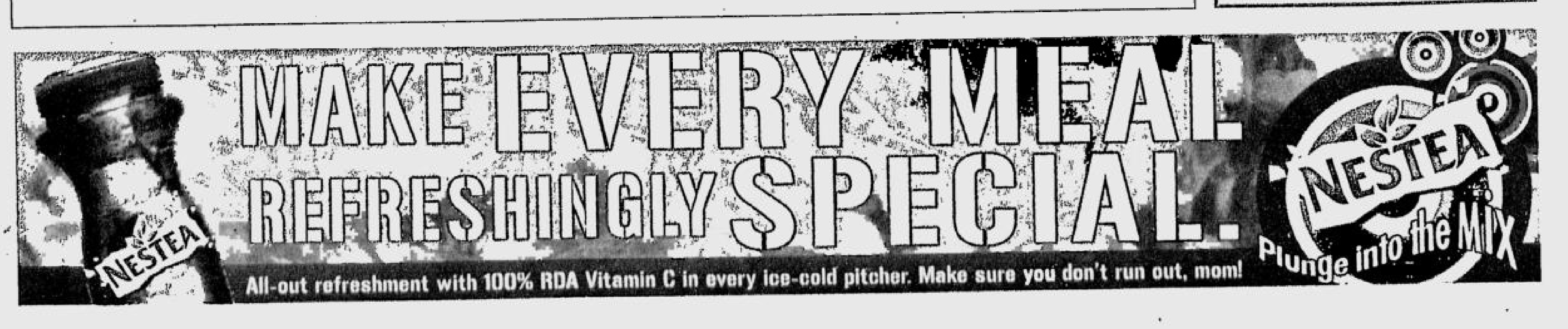
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